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TEMPORAL STRUCTURE IN THE EARLY FICTION OF CARLOS FUENTES

BY

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Temporal Structure in the Early Fiction of Carlos Fuentes" submitted by Monica Elise Peters in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Hispanic Studies.

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External Examiner

Date April 8, 1980

I dedicate this work with deep affection to my grandmother, Mrs. Virginia Griffith, who has been a constant source of inspiration throughout my studies.

ABSTRACT

To date, the total of Carlos Fuentes' fiction amounts to nine novels and two volumes of short stories. On the basis of their thematic content and the narrative techniques employed in them, we distinguish two significant periods among them and, in this study, focus on the works that constitute the earlier period: Los días enmascarados (short stories, 1954), La región más transparente (1958), Las buenas conciencias (1959), La muerte de Artemio Cruz (1962), and Aura (1962).

The purpose of this study is to analyse the function of time in the structure of these works and the relationship of this structure to Fuentes' concept of time in general. Our first three chapters are devoted, respectively, to the fictive present, the fictive past, and the fusion of past and present, and give a description both of the consistent patterns that determine the nature of time itself and of the manner in which time is an integral part of the organization of the narrative. Our fourth chapter focuses on the principal thematic elements of Fuentes' fiction and shows the relationship between certain aspects of content and narrative form.

On the basis of our analysis, we conclude that,

departing from a fictive present initially characterized by an objective chronology, Fuentes has explored the underlying nature of time and its significance both for the individual and for Mexico. His interpretation of the present by means of demonstrating its relationship to the past allows him to describe how time progresses in accordance with a cyclical pattern. Such a pattern is indicative of a tendency in human behaviour to consist of a constant repetition of the past in obedience to the long established archetypal patterns of myth.

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INTRODUCTION

The study of time can scarcely be considered superfluous in any context since, as many thinkers have affirmed, there is no experience in life which is not attached to a temporal index. Hans Meyerhoff states that "Time is particularly significant to man because it is inseparable from the concept of self".[1] Miguel León-Portilla, in his study of the concept of time in Mayan thought, comments, "el tiempo . . . de tantas formas ha cautivado la atención del hombre, ser temporal por excelencia, porque viviendo en el tiempo, tiene conciencia de ello".[2] A. Cornelius Benjamin speaks of "the unique pertinence of time to the basic concerns of man".[3] From the moment man became conscious of himself, he has been obsessed with time and with himself in relation to it.

According to theoreticians,[4] the obsession with time has been accentuated in the twentieth century more than in any other period. A.A. Mendilow, writing on the subject of this preoccupation in an attempt to analyse the reasons for it, suggests that the anguish of modern man with respect to time is partly the result of radical changes in the structures, such as religion and philosophy, which sustained him in the past.[5] Mendilow proposes, moreover, that the anguished concern with time is a result of the general instability produced by the rapid changes in all aspects of modern life:

> It would seem to be not unlikely, therefore, that what is widely referred to as the 'time-obsession of the twentieth century' is conditioned by the increasing pace of living, by the widespread sense of the transience of all forms of modern life, and more particularly perhaps, by the rapidity of social and economic change. These factors have taken from people that feeling of stasis in society, that assurance of permanence that appears to have marked more confident and more slowly changing periods.
>
> Disintegration is menacing every form of life . . .
>
> Everywhere the old configurations have broken up.[6]

Furthermore, the suggestion has been advanced that the twentieth century interest in time is not new: it is simply that in the present century there has been a more conscious attempt to formulate a philosophy which has always been implicit in the total perspective of the West.[7] On the other hand, J.T. Fraser sees the Second World War as a key to the problem in the present century:

> In that upheaval, more than in the

> routine existence of organized society, ideas related to time, such as inevitability and the freedom to dispose of one's time appeared in no uncertain terms as the fundamental aspects of existence; reminders of the irreversibility of death (a knowledge of temporal nature) were the order of the day.[8]

Whatever the causes may be, the profound preoccupation with time is manifested in several ways in all forms of life. Mendilow observes,

> Where the very modes of thinking and feeling bear the mark of the time-obsession of the twentieth century, it is but to be expected that the forms of artistic expression will do likewise. The concern for time reveals itself in every art.[9]

As Mendilow also points out, literature is particularly sensitive to time because, as a temporal art, it describes events that take place in time.[10] Time is especially relevant to the narrative and has become an obsession of modern novelists in particular, the result, as Mendilow affirmed, of the "sensitivity of the novel to the forms and pressures of the age".[11]

Because of the significance the discussion of time has assumed in the twentieth century and because of its particular relevance to fiction and the interest shown in it by various contemporary writers, it has become important to study the function of time in the works of modern novelists. Margaret Church points out that "the understanding of the form, content, thought and motif of fiction depends on the understanding of an author's attitude toward time and space".[12] In other words, the novel in its totality reflects the author's attitude towards time.[13] By the same token, Georges Poulet considers it essential to focus on the writer's sense of man's time and space in order to discover the total significance of his work.[14] Mendilow, too, agrees that "time affects every aspect of fiction: the theme, the form and the medium --language".[15] In order to understand a writer's work fully, it is therefore as important to study the effect of time on his technique and his form as it is to study its effect on his themes.

In the light of these and other, more particular concerns, we have chosen to study the problems of time in part of the work of Carlos Fuentes. Carlos Fuentes is one among many contemporary writers of fiction in Spanish America for whom problems of time are of great interest. Their interest is not unique, but is part of a tendency that originated in western literatures, in the work of Proust, Joyce, Faulkner and Dos Passos, for example, whose novels have had a significant influence on contemporary writers in Spanish America.

But Ivan A. Schulman offers a more essential explanation for the preoccupation with time in the Latin American novel:

> El hombre goza de la libertad, afirman los teóricos del existencialismo: pero una libertad sin tradiciones y sin armazón platónica es, en verdad, una libertad aterradora, pues impone sobre el individuo el deber de escoger y de determinar su destino individual. Para el hombre americano este atolladero se complica debido al problema cultural, . . . es decir, el de la resolución del problema de la autoidentificación y la búsqueda de raíces en el pasado. De allí que pueda explicarse en un contexto hispanoamericano, como vigencia y no como imitación, la obsesión por el tiempo casi universal entre los novelistas de América. El tiempo es para ellos historia, identidad, el peso de problemas soterrados y de latente explosividad. La temática del tiempo en la narrativa contemporánea, y sobre todo, su movimiento inverso como en _Viaje a la semilla_ y _Los pasos perdidos_, de Alejo Carpentier, son un reflejo del dilema cultural hispanoamericano.[16]

Among the major contemporary writers of Spanish America most concerned with time are Jorge Luis Borges, Alejo Carpentier, Juan Rulfo, Miguel Angel Asturias, Gabriel García Márquez and Carlos Fuentes. Although there are considerable differences in their treatment of the subject, the cultural dilemna of which Schulman writes is reflected in all their works.

Carlos Fuentes is one of the best known among contemporary novelists of Mexico. In his fiction he discusses some of the most critical problems of Mexico and, by implication, of Latin America and the world in general. His novels and short stories are characterized by an obsession with time, at a superficial as well as at deeper levels. Moreover, it is evident in all aspects of his work, for even the other themes he treats are, to some extent, closely related to his concerns about time. The structures of his narratives do not revolve around the conventions of beginnings, climaxes and dénouements, but around time. In fact, time appears to be the most significant factor both of the themes and the form of Fuentes' novels and short stories. To this extent, it could be argued that an understanding of how time functions in his narratives appears to be essential to an understanding of his works.

To date, Fuentes has published nine novels and two volumes of short stories: Los días enmascarados (short stories, 1954), La región más transparente (1958), Las buenas conciencias (1959), La muerte de Artemio Cruz (1962), Aura (1962) Cantar de ciegos (short stories, 1964), Zona sagrada (1967), Cambio de piel (1967), Cumpleaños (1969), Terra nostra (1975) and La cabeza de la hidra (1978).[17] However, this study will deal only with his early fiction, and will consist of an analysis of his first five works.

Although there is an evident, continuous line of development throughout Fuentes' works, there is also a significant difference between his earlier and later fiction that permits us to identify the former as a relatively homogeneous group constituting an appropriate corpus for the study of his use of time and its relationship to narrative structure. For the most part, our division of his work into two distinct periods (1954-1962 and 1964-1978) is founded on two basic criteria: on the one hand, the nature of the content of his fiction and, on the other, his treatment of time as a significant element of structure. It is probably not accidental that each of the periods described is "introduced" by a volume of short stories which anticipates many of the narrative techniques and preoccupations developed at greater length in the novels to follow. In this sense, they not only introduce the novels but provide a general focus, both in terms of the style and themes.

The nature of Fuentes' writing itself is the principal factor in dividing them as indicated. In the first instance, the division is a product of their subject matter. The early novels and short stories are decidedly Mexican in content. The principal characters, the majority of the minor ones, and the settings of his narratives are all predominantly Mexican. Moreover, as can be expected from the use of Mexican characters and settings, the early works deal with themes pertinent to the Mexican situation, such as the society of Mexico City and the regional capitals, the past, present and future of the nation, and Mexican mythology.

Another of the major themes which clearly separates these early novels and short stories as a group from the later fiction is their relationship to history, a theme which is so prevalent in Fuentes' early writings that they could almost be called historical works. This does not mean that history is not treated in the later fiction; it may even be considered to have a more fundamental importance in some later novels, such as *Terra nostra*. What distinguishes the earlier works as a group is that they all deal with Mexican history, starting from the modern beginnings of Mexico and leading up to the present. The fact that much of this historical material deals with the Mexican Revolution of 1910 and the characteristics of its development is another unifying factor in the early works, and one which decidedly separates them from the later fiction. In fact, there is only one example of non-Mexican history in the early works, the reference to the Spanish Civil War in which the son of Artemio Cruz is killed (*La muerte de Artemio Cruz*).

Unlike the earlier works, beginning with *Cantar de ciegos* and increasingly in the novels which follow, the formerly "closed" environment of the novels and short stories is "opened". In terms of characterization, settings and content, there is a tendency to look towards the world outside Mexico. In *Cantar de ciegos*, although for the most part the major characters are still Mexican and many of the stories are set at least partly in Mexico, there is a general broadening of the fictional environment. The younger Elena portrayed in "Las dos Elenas" is a liberated woman, not unlike her counterparts in countries of the world other than Mexico. The action of "Un alma pura" takes place in Switzerland, and one of the major characters, Juan Luis' wife, is non-Mexican. "A la víbora de la mar" takes place on board a cruise ship and involves all non-Mexican characters except Isabel, the protagonist. Although the major characters of *Zona sagrada* are Mexican, many of the other important characters, such as Giancarlo, are not. And even Claudia and Guillermo do not appear to be typically Mexican, particularly when one considers the glamorous, cosmopolitan lives they lead.

Moreover, only a portion of the action takes place in Mexico; much of it occurs in Europe. Similarly, while two of the major characters of Cambio de piel are Mexican, the other two, equally important, and all of the minor characters are foreigners. Although the basic action is set in Mexico, the majority of the flashbacks, which are extensive, deal with action which takes place in other countries such as the United States, Czechoslovakia, Argentina, Greece. None of the "reincarnations" of the characters in Cumpleaños appears to be Mexican, and the majority of the action, except for one minor incident in the Gulf of Mexico, takes place in Europe and in England. The content of Terra nostra is similar: the characters are Europeans and, except for the chapter entitled "El nuevo mundo", which takes place in a location in the Americas, the action is based in Europe.

The later fiction reveals much broader thematic perspectives, which not only encompass considerations of a universal nature, but, in many cases, establish a contrast between life in Mexico and life in other parts of the world. The basis of Mexican mythology in Los días enmascarados is placed in the broader context of a more universally recognised mythology in Cantar de ciegos, Zona sagrada, Cambio de piel and Terra nostra; for example, the classical myth of Ulysses and

Telemachus, Penelope and Circe, and the Judeo-Christian myth of Adam and Eve. Concern for the individual in Mexico and his direction --in *La región más transparente* and *La muerte de Artemio Cruz*-- becomes concern for the direction of man in general --in *Zona sagrada*, *Cambio de piel*, *Cumpleaños* and *Terra nostra*. By the same token, the three major "historical" works of the later period --*Cambio de piel*, *Cumpleaños* and *Terra nostra*-- all deal with European or universal history, and where Mexican concerns are dwelt on, they are also placed in a broader, universal context.

In terms of the aspects of time which must be discussed with respect to Fuentes' writings, there are also significant differences between the two groups of works which would, to a great extent, make it difficult to treat them in the same manner. The later novels have a looser form and appear to be much less deliberately "structured" than the earlier ones. Moreover, it is clear that the methods employed to discuss time in *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* or *La región más transparente* would need to be elaborated and refined if applied, for example, to *Cumpleaños* or *Terra nostra*.

In light of these observations on the division of Carlos Fuentes' works into two periods, and also because a detailed study of time in his entire work would be a very lengthy, if not unmanageable, undertaking, we propose limiting our analysis to his first volume of short stories and his first four novels. Much has already been written on Carlos Fuentes, in countless articles, numerous dissertations and several books. Our study, however, is intended to compensate for a significant lack in critical literature on Fuentes. Time and its importance in narrative structure, in all or in a major part of Fuentes' fiction, has not yet been the subject of a systematic and comprehensive analysis. Some major studies on Fuentes have appeared, with chapters dedicated to time as a theme, and these have also included some discussion on related aspects of structure. In his dissertation on time in the Spanish American novel, Armand F. Baker studied this aspect of La muerte de Artemio Cruz in comparison with other contemporary novels.[18] More recently, Liliana Befumo Boschi and Elisa Calabrese have studied time and myth in three novels: La muerte de Artemio Cruz, Zona sagrada and Cambio de piel.[19] The work of Rene Jara,[20] on myth in La muerte de Artemio Cruz, was found to be especially pertinent for our Chapter IV. Although they do provide interesting insights into the novels discussed, none of these studies is an attempt at a comprehensive view of time in Fuentes' work.

The purpose of this study, then, is to analyse the function of time in the structure of Fuentes' early fiction and the relationship of this structure to the major thematic elements concerning time expressed in his works. Such an analysis will not only allow us to understand how time has given shape to the novels and stories discussed, but will also provide some insight into the meaning of time in Fuentes' works. We will not attempt to discuss the nature of time as a universal or metaphysical concept, but will endeavour to focus on the constant indications of his concept of time in order to arrive at some idea of its importance in his works and what it means to the author himself.

Our discussion of the role of time in the works of Fuentes to be analysed will be presented in four chapters. Under the headings of the fictive present, the fictive past, and the fusion of past and present, corresponding to our first three chapters, we will describe the manner in which time is an integral part of the organization of the narrative and how several consistent patterns emerge that determine the nature of time itself. Our fourth chapter will deal with the principal thematic elements of Fuentes' fiction and will show what relationship exists between certain aspects of content and narrative form.

NOTES

[1] Hans Meyerhoff, Time in Literature (Los Angeles, 1968), p. 1.

[2] Miguel León-Portilla, Tiempo y realidad en el pensamiento maya (México, 1968), p. 15.

[3] A. Cornelius Benjamin, "Ideas of Time in the History of Philosophy", in The Voices of Time, ed. J.T. Fraser (New York, 1966), p. 3.

[4] A.A. Mendilow, Time and the Novel (New York, 1972), p. 3.

[5] Mendilow, pp. 3-11.

[6] Mendilow, p. 6.

[7] Mendilow, p. 3.

[8] J. T. Fraser (ed.), The Voices of Time (New York, 1966), p. xvii.

[9] Mendilow, p. 12.

[10] Mendilow, p. 23. The space arts --painting, sculpture and architecture-- are based on coexistence in space; the time arts --music, literature-- are based on consecutiveness in time.

[11] Mendilow, p. 12.

[12] Margaret Church, Time and Reality: Studies in Contemporary Fiction (Chapel Hill, 1963), p. 4.

[13] Church, p. 4.

[14] Georges Poulet, Studies in Human Time, trans. Elliott Coleman (Baltimore, 1956).

[15] Mendilow, p. 31.

[16] Ivan A. Schulman et al., Coloquio sobre la novela hispanoamericana (Mexico, 1967), p. 25.

[17] For the editions of Fuentes' works from which we have quoted in the course of our study, see our bibliography. Page references given in parentheses after each quotation are to these editions.

[18] Armand F. Baker, "El tiempo en la novela hispanoamericana", Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation (University of Iowa, 1967).

[19] Liliana Befumo Boschi and Elisa Calabrese, Nostalgia del futuro en la obra de Carlos Fuentes (Buenos Aires, 1974).

[20] Rene Jara C., "El mito en la nueva novela hispano-americana: a propósito de La muerte de

Artemio Cruz", Signos: Estudios de Lengua y Literatura (Valparaíso, Chile), II, núms. 1-2 (enero-febrero, 1968), pp. 3-53.

CHAPTER I

THE FICTIVE PRESENT

It is the general nature of narratives to adopt a causal pattern governed by the unfolding of time. In the modern novel, however, the narrative often develops along a number of different lines, all governed, in varying degrees, by the movement of time. Yet, even in modern novels, there is often one level of the narrative which serves as a point of departure, a basis to which all other aspects of temporal structure are related. This level of the narrative, and its function as a point of departure, are described by A.A. Mendilow in Time and the Novel as the "fictive present":

> There is as a rule one point of time in the story which serves as the point of reference. From this point the fictive present may be considered as beginning. In other words, the reader if he is engrossed in his reading translates all that happens from this moment of time onwards into an imaginative present of his own and yields to the illusion that he is himself participating in the action or situation, or at least is witnessing it as happening, not merely as having happened. Everything that antedates that point, as for instance exposition, is felt as a fictive past, while all that succeeds it, as for instance those premonitions and anticipatory hints that novelists find so useful for directing the attention forward to the climax or evoking a feeling of suspense, are felt as future.[1]

To speak of the "present" in the term "fictive present" is, however, deceptive. It does not necessarily imply the existence of a genuine present and in fact refers to the present moment of neither the author nor the reader. Usually, the fictive present is a past time from the standpoint of both the author and the reader, although, as in the case of many works of science-fiction, it could also be a future. By the same token, the fictive present is frequently narrated in the past rather than the present tense. The present moment of the characters and of the basic story is portrayed by the narrator as belonging to the past and is communicated as such to the reader, for whom the events narrated are even more remote. It is therefore through the skill of the writer and the mental effort of the reader that the illusion of a fictive present is created.

As a point of reference and point of departure for the narrative, the fictive present serves to provide the reader with an objective sense of time and is the level of the narrative which has the greatest correspondence with the reader's real time. Known also as conceptual or chronometric time, "objective time" refers to time measured by the clock. It is the time of common reality, conveniently measured by motion and change and calculated in seconds, minutes, hours, or in days, months, years and centuries. Objective time is therefore synonymous with the chronological computation of time and is unaffected either by events themselves or by the manner in which those events are perceived. It is solely a means of obtaining an objective measurement of events. According to Mendilow, it is "the time-relation among objects, unaffected by man's perception". "Clock time", he explains, "has no meaning for the imagination but is a highly artificial and arbitrary convention evolved for the purposes of social expediency in order to regulate and to coordinate actions involving more than one person. We catch a train or leave the office or sit down to dinner by clock time".[2]

Absolute objective time is, to some extent, extraneous to fiction. Strictly speaking, it does not pertain to the novel because the chronological flow of time is not subject to being halted, encapsulated, or recaptured through literature. As Mendilow has demonstrated, a true sense of objective time is pertinent to the novel from an economic rather than an aesthetic point of view.[3] It concerns the time required either to write or to read, actions which, unlike the events described in a fictional narrative, occur within the context of a real historical time and can be recorded precisely. True objective time is therefore exterior to the novel and has less bearing on it as a work of art than on it as a "book", and all that is entailed in its production and presentation to the public.

When discussing the novel, the objective time with which we are concerned is, in reality, no more than a semblance of objective time. It is "fictional time" or the "pseudo-chronological duration of the theme of the novel".[4] Although the novelist may have endeavoured to establish the exact period of time encompassed by the events narrated in his work and may equally have sought to create the sensation of the passage of time, the chronology he constructs is, at best, artificial. It cannot be measured in exactly the same manner as real historical time and is not subject to the same constraints. The selection of materials undertaken by the novelist in the composition of his narrative entails, for instance, a form of manipulation that appreciably affects the representation of historical time. In the simplest of terms, a narrative that covers the events of a few hours may require much longer than a few hours to read, while another that encompasses several years evidently does not require such an extended period of reading. By the same token, just as a novelist may devote many pages to the events of several moments, those of several years may be dispensed with in no more than a few lines.

In this chapter, we shall comment on only one aspect of "the pseudo-chronological duration of the theme of the novel", namely, the role of chronology in the creation of a fictive present as a basis for the narrative. Our analysis of the fictive present will not only permit us to determine the extent to which Fuentes has organized his narratives within the context of an objective frame of reference, but will clarify certain aspects of the structure of his work and thereby provide the basis for a later discussion of the thematic implications of his use of time.

Los días enmascarados

Los días enmascarados, Fuentes' first work of fiction, already contains rudimentary forms of several features characteristic of his later works, with respect to the themes and general content of the stories and certain aspects of narrative technique and structure. Of the six stories in the collection, four are developed according to a traditional linear narrative pattern, with no evidence of the chronological dislocation that is typical of many modern narratives, including Fuentes' later works. One of the stories, "En defensa de la trigolibia", a seven-paged account in which political rhetoric is satirized, is more of a narrative essay than a short story, containing little that could be considered character study or development. The remaining story, "Chac Mool", has a three-tiered narrative structure.

The fictive present of "Tlactocatzine, del jardín de Flandes", "Letanía de la orquídea", "Por boca de los dioses" and "El que inventó la pólvora" is, in each case, equivalent to the total period of time encompassed by the narrative. Thus, a discussion of the fictive present of these stories is tantamount to a discussion of their entire plot. In three of them, the total period of time involved is relatively brief and, perhaps as a consequence of this fact, is developed with considerable attention to documenting the chronological continuity of the sequence of events. In "Tlactocatzine, del jardín de Flandes", for example, are depicted six days in the life of a young man in an old mansion haunted by the ghost of the Empress Carlota. An awareness of the chronological sequence of events on the part of the reader is maintained because the text contains the reproduction of the narrator's own diary which, moreover, constitutes the entire story. There is no dislocation of events since the diary can only serve to maintain a chronological record of events. Although the verb tenses in the narrator's account change constantly from the present to the present perfect or to the preterite, the narrator nevertheless manages to maintain the temporal links of the plot by indicating such things as the period of time he has spent in the house ("Menos de veinticuatro horas entre estos muros", p. 40), or the exact time of day ("Sonaban las seis cuando escuché música en el salón", p. 46-47).

In "Letanía de la orquídea", the story of a Panamanian whose death is caused by an orchid which issues from his body, the period of time encompassed by the narrative is less than twenty-four hours. There is little attention paid to recording the passage of time in any sense, but the causal sequence of events is sufficient to maintain a linear chronology. There are specific indications, however, that place the beginning of the action at noon on a day in winter ("Mirá, vé: ya empezó el invierno"; "eran las doce del día", p. 51) and its ending in the early morning of the following day ("Y allí amaneció Muriel, partido por la mitad", p.58). The events of "Por boca de los dioses", depicting the encounter of the protagonist, Oliverio, with the gods of Mexico, are also encompassed within a period of less than twenty-four hours. As in "Letanía de la orquídea", the action begins about noon one unspecified day and ends at daybreak on the following day. In this case, too, the action is developed according to a linear chronology, with no dislocation of events or suspension of the fictive present.

The structure of the fictive present in "El que inventó la pólvora" differs from that of these three stories in one aspect only: the period of time involved is considerably greater. The fictive present is developed without interruption and covers a period of more than a year. The fact that the events of this relatively long period of time are covered in a short space (fourteen pages) has little bearing on the chronological development of the narrative in this case. What might possibly have been affected is the unity of action. However, its unity is preserved by the fact that the story focuses on a single issue, to the exclusion of the development of character or the detailed development of plot. A great deal of time passes, but only a single, sustained event is depicted, and there is much repetition in the little that actually does take place. The story is a graphic illustration of the absurdity of consumer society and rapid consumption in the twentieth century. A long period of time is therefore necessary in order to illustrate the gradual deterioration of society and its effects, but Fuentes passes over a great deal of time with just a brief comment. The chronology is maintained through the uninterrupted causal sequence of events. However, the repetitiveness of the action creates a cyclical effect, which is further reinforced at the end of the story, when the narrator is depicted as having returned to the very point of man's origin:

> Estoy sentado en una playa que antes --si recuerdo algo de geografía-- no bañaba mar alguno. No hay más muebles en el universo

> que dos estrellas, las olas y arena. He tomado unas ramas secas; las froto, durante mucho tiempo . . . ah, la primera chispa. . . . (p. 96-97)

With this in mind, the knowledge that a year has passed since the beginning of the narrative ("Ahora que ha pasado un año desde que mi primera cuchara se derritió . . . ", p. 94) creates little impression on the reader. The importance of a linear structure is thereby diminished in favour of the cyclical notion implicit in the return of man to a pre-consumer society.

"Chac Mool", the first story of Los días enmascarados, is the most interesting in the volume from the point of view of narrative technique. It differs from the others in that it is based on three distinct time lines. The story of Filiberto's death at the hands of Chac Mool, the Mayan rain god, is narrated through the transcription of Filiberto's diary and through the story told by his friend after his death. The use of this technique in this context poses some problems particularly with regard to determining what should be considered as fictive present. Essentially, the problem arises as a consequence of the presence of a narrator who identifies himself as a friend of the protagonist of the story but who is temporally removed from the story he narrates, which in turn is developed on two different time lines. In a strict sense, the fictive present is the narrator's present time, the moment in which he tells his story. However, his present time is not pertinent to the narrative itself. It is so unrelated to the major events of the story, that we may be tempted to disregard it as a possible fictive present. Nothing is known about the narrator's present time except that it is to be placed some time shortly after the occurrence of the incidents narrated in the story which begin with Filiberto's death during Holy Week ("Sucedió en Semana Santa", p. 7). Likewise, nothing is known about the present actions of the narrator at the moment he conveys his narrative. However, since the narrator is presented as such and identified as the friend of Filiberto, his time must be taken into account if only for the sake of determining his perspective. The fact that the events he proceeds to narrate are placed in an objective time frame from the very beginning ("Sucedió en Semana Santa", p. 7) leads one to place his present time also in such a framework. It is as a result of considering the moment in which the story is narrated that the entire story itself may be considered as belonging to the past. If it were not for the phrase at the beginning of the story, "Hace poco tiempo Filiberto murió ahogado en Acapulco" (p. 7), which situates the event a short time before the narration, the fictive present of the story would consist of the period beginning with the death of Filiberto and ending with his friend's (the narrator's) arrival at the house. In relation to this possible fictive present, the past would then entail the other time represented, the story of Filiberto from approximately one and a half years before his death until he leaves for Acapulco. By taking the time of the narration into account, however, none of the other action of the novel can be considered as fictive present.

"Chac Mool" is the only story of Los días enmascarados which contains any novelty in terms of the techniques employed in the fictive present. Its most significant aspect is to be found in its use of an identifiable narrator temporally removed from the events he is narrating, a form which does not recur in Fuentes' early fiction but does appear, in a variety of forms, in several later novels (Cambio de piel, Zona sagrada, Terra nostra). As a narrative developed on different time lines, "Chac Mool" is a precursor of the majority of Fuentes' later novels. For the rest, the narratives of Los días enmascarados follow a traditional structure, which can probably be explained, particularly when one considers Fuentes' later works, by the fact that Los días enmascarados was his first work.

La región más transparente

Except for the novelette Aura, in which a sense of chronological cohesion is partly the product of a relatively brief span of fictional time, La región más transparente is more dependent than any of Fuentes' other early novels on the continuous development of a fictive present. Primarily, this is because in La región más transparente the basic narrative is developed within the context of a specific chronology.

The plot begins precisely at 6:15 one unspecified morning in 1951, when Gladys García, a jaded prostitute, is seen leaving a cabaret (pp. 21 and 22). Although the time of day is given, it is only in the index of the novel that the year is indicated. An oblique reference to the year does appear somewhat later in the text, in the lyrics of a song ("Ay minué minué minué, lo bailaba el siglo quince y ahora en el cincuenta y uno", p. 61), but it is not until the end of the first two major parts of the novel that there is a specific reference to the year (p. 435). The action of the entire novel is concluded, at the end of more than four hundred pages of text, on a night in December in 1954 (pp. 436 and 453), with a description of Ixca Cienfuegos' wandering through the streets of the sleeping capital.

Although the chronological limits of the novel are easily established, development of the narrative is by no means straightforward, but follows a considerably complicated and tortuous path. The ordered development of the fictive present is repeatedly suspended in favor of the fictive past. The rhythm of the narrative varies appreciably. At times it is slowed to allow for the narration of events that occur simultaneously in different places. At times Fuentes has exercised a rigorous selection and compression in the narration of events and has omitted lengthy periods of time in order to cover the total span of four years more rapidly. All of these factors produce an extremely fragmented structure, often obliging the reader to re-construct the chronology of the narrative by focusing whenever possible on the sequence of events and the scant references to time when they occur.

In order to examine the nature of the fictive present in La región más transparente, it is necessary to consider the three parts of the novel separately. These three parts in fact correspond to three unequal periods of time: Part I covers a mere three days early in 1951; Part II encompasses a period of several months ending on September 16 of the same year; and Part III focuses on the last eight months of 1954.

In accordance with the nature of its content and narrative form, Part I may be divided into two segments. The first segment begins, as referred to earlier, with the introduction of the prostitute Gladys García and an observation as to the time of day (pp. 21 and 22). There are enough references to make it clear to the reader that immediately after the introduction of Gladys García the action is abruptly shifted to the night of the following day (p. 24). It is on that night that Gladys García encounters Norma, Pichi, and others who are on their way to Bobó's party, a party which then becomes the focal point of the narrative for the next 37 pages and serves to introduce an entire group of new characters, many of them belonging to the upper strata of Mexican society.

As the description of the party progresses, the passage of time is perceived not so much through specific references to time itself (there is only one more in this segment: p. 49) as through the sequence of events and the arrival and departure of the carousers at the party. Moreover, a new element is introduced: the description of the party is alternated with the narration of events that occur in a variety of different localities at the same time as the party continues. In representing these different, but simultaneous, actions, numerous space-shifts occur, with the result that the narrative alternates between the party in Bobó's apartment and several other localities, such as Federico Robles' office (p. 32-34), the restaurant at which Juan Morales entertains his family (p. 35-38), the bar where another group of revellers are about to set out for Bobó's party (p. 45-46), or the apartment where Hortensia Chacón is waiting for Robles (p. 57-58). Although the events external to the party are represented as simultaneous to the party itself, there is not sufficient continuity among them to indicate any progress in the passage of time. By and large, they are isolated incidents, in some cases related to others which occur much later in the novel. What they do demonstrate, however, is that the fictive present of La región is not restricted to a single linear sequence of incidents ordered chronologically.

The end of the first segment of Part I coincides with the end of the description of the party at Bobó's. A cycle of two days is thereby completed. However, a chronology of the passage of the hours is evidently less important than the fact that the incidents narrated occur either in the early hours of the morning or during the night. To this extent, the development of a fictive present is more dependent on the cyclical representation of time than on its linear progression.

The second narrative segment of Part I covers the events of the day following Bobó's party. It begins, as the first segment had, with a precise reference to the time, eleven in the morning (p. 62), a reference which supposes an abrupt shift in time similar to that in the first segment whereby Gladys García was first portrayed in the early hours of the morning and then immediately in the early hours of the night of the next day. The cohesiveness of the narrative is maintained, however, by a number of devices.

In the first instance, the hour of eleven in the morning serves as a point of departure for the description (pp. 62-64) of the different circumstances of several of the characters already encountered. Some of them are portrayed as if pursuing the preoccupations in which they had been engaged during the previous night. Thus, for example, when Manuel Zamacona sits at his desk to write, his thoughts constitute a continuation of the discussion in which he had participated at the party; Pimpinela sets out to conduct her business with Roberto Régules, just as she had planned it the night before; Rosenda Pola and Hortensia Chacón, the one a recluse and the other blind, are still entrapped in the darkness of their respective existences. The progress of the fictive present from the first to the second segment of Part I is therefore initially determined by a sense of continuity in the narrative created by a succession of incidents placed within the context of an objective sense of time.

Moreover, the representation of the fictive present in the second segment of Part I, as in the first segment, is considerably affected by certain aspects of its structure. The space-shift serves again as the principal device used by Fuentes both to advance the narrative and to create the effect that separate actions occur simultaneously. As in the alternation between the description of Bobó's party and incidents external to it, the overall effect is that of an apparently disjointed narrative. This appearance is further exaggerated as a consequence of the zig-zag described by time, since each occasion that the narrative returns to the activities of a particular character entails an implicit return to the moment when that character last appeared. The disintegration of the narrative is prevented, however, by the continuity of incidents affecting individual characters and by the ubiquitous presence of Ixca Cienfuegos. In many respects, Cienfuegos is more of an observer than a participant in the events narrated in the novel. He is consequently an effective guide through the maze of incidents and a relative constant that links many of the characters and connects the different fragments of the narrative to each other. At the same time, he reinforces the notions of simultaneity and change. Since his incessant wandering through the capital allows him to see the many incidents which occur simultaneously, his ubiquitousness provides the reader with a similar impression of simultaneity. Yet, since time does not stand still, even for him, his continuous presence equally provides a standpoint from which to measure the march of time. It is as if the many different threads of the fictive present are combined in the progress of the single life of Ixca Cienfuegos.

In spite of the similarities between the two segments of Part I, however, the second of the two contains a radical departure from the form of the first one. In addition to the complications caused by the narration of events that occur simultaneously, the development of the fictive present in the second segment is fragmentary and its chronology is frequently disrupted through the abundant use of the time-shift. Moreover, it is not simply a matter of an abrupt change in time used to obtain a rapid advance in the narrative, of the kind we have already referred to, but of the periodic suspension of the fictive present in order to incorporate extended passages belonging to the fictive past. Through their own recollections, the characters are made to abandon their present circumstances and to relive, through memory, their experiences from the past. The outcome is that objective chronology in the fictive present is de-emphasized in this segment of Part I. In order to preserve its continuity, it is necessary to focus on the links that connect the separated fragments of the narrative and thereby maintain a sense of chronology.

The episode involving Pimpinela de Ovando is an excellent example of this procedure. She is initially referred to in the following terms: "Pimpinela de Ovando caminaba erguida y perfumada, detrás de un par de anteojos negros, por Madero, hacia el despacho de Roberto Régules" (p. 63). This detail is one among several enumerated at the beginning of the second segment of Part I with the purpose of representing the activities and preoccupations of many of the characters at eleven in the morning on the the day following Bobó's party. It is not elaborated upon, however, until twenty-seven pages later (pp. 90-91), when Pimpinela is again described in the same terms and is still on her way to Régules' office. The development of the part of the fictive present concerning Pimpinela is then suspended almost immediately in order to interpolate a history of her family, "los de Ovando", which occupies the next ten pages (pp. 91-100) and is filtered principally through her recollection of the past. When the narration of the fictive present is renewed (p. 100), Pimpinela is again referred to in the terms of the first description of her. She continues her walk to Regules' office, avoiding any possible eye-contact with Ixca Cienfuegos as she passes by him. The clues to the continuity of this single, but dispersed, action are therefore to be found in the repetition of the same description of Pimpinela, and in the appearance of Ixca Cienfuegos. These clues not only serve to maintain the thread of the fictive present, but indicate the extent to which the narrative has been expanded to include several actions occurring within a short period of time.

In many respects, the first part of the novel is a kind of introduction to the novel as a whole. By focusing on a relatively brief period of time, the narrative is limited with respect to the amount of incident belonging to the fictive present that it contains. It is therefore able to serve the purpose of introducing the principal characters and the preoccupations that predominate in the remainder of the novel. Above all, it establishes a pattern of delving into the past as well as the present and the mechanisms whereby this is obtained. The basis of the novel is a fragmented narrative in which abrupt shifts in time and space are employed in order to accommodate both the fictive past and events that occur simultaneously. The overall effect is to de-emphasize the concept of an objective linear chronology. Although there are several references to time, it is mainly through the sequence of events that an awareness of the passage of time is created. Indeed, the emphasis given to the morning in the beginning of Part I and to the night at the end is more indicative of a cyclical than a linear chronology.

Part II of La región más transparente is the longest of the three parts. Its relationship with the preceding part is immediately established by the fact that the incidents already narrated are continued, complicated, and brought to a moment of crisis. Unlike Part I, however, which involves a relatively brief period of objective time (3 days), Part II spans several months. The total period in question is somewhat vague since it is not clear at what precise moment the action of Part II begins. It can only be deduced, as we shall demonstrate later, that several months have elapsed before it ends with a detailed account of events that occur on September 15 and 16, 1951.

For the most part, the patterns established in Part I are prevalent in the second part: the narration of the fictive present is fragmented by the accumulation of simultaneous incidents and the interpolation of the fictive past, both of which entail abrupt changes in time and space. Yet, there are some basic variations of the established patterns. The introduction of a series of vignettes depicting various aspects of life in Mexico is a significant innovation. These vignettes are generally extraneous to the central narrative and have no causal relationship with it. However, they should not be seen solely as arbitrary appendages since they are structurally and thematically incorporated into the text.

A number of the vignettes are to be understood as representative of incidents occurring simultaneously with the central action of the novel and, in some instances, a reference to time is sufficient to establish this relationship. Others are integrated into the texture of the narrative through the ubiquitous presence of Ixca Cienfuegos. One such example occurs in the vignette which begins "Vámonos de aquí, manito" (p. 344). In this particular instance, the passage that follows depicts Cienfuegos on his way to Hortensia's apartment (pp. 344-345). As he passes along the street, he exchanges glances with one of the boys who, in the vignette, had spoken of leaving Mexico City in search of a more profitable existence elsewhere.

The manner in which the vignettes are introduced therefore corresponds to the techniques whereby the number of incidents encompassed by the fictive present is increased and the pace of the narrative slowed and fragmented in earlier portions of the novel. Their ultimate purpose is somewhat distinctive, however. They are not used throughout the entire second part of the novel, but the eleven which do appear serve as prologues to the longer segments of the narrative that follow them, regardless of whether those segments represent a continuation of the fictive present or are interpolations belonging to the fictive past. In brief, although the vignettes are without causal relationship to the central narrative, they serve to enlarge its thematic context and content by focusing on characters and incidents which would otherwise not have appeared in the novel. They therefore allow Fuentes to broaden the scope of his portrait of Mexican society and permit him to demonstrate that the preoccupations with which he is concerned in his novel are evident at all levels of life.

In addition to the effects ~~obtained by~~ the intercalation of the vignettes, the representation of the flow of time in the second part of the novel acquires a further distinctive characteristic as a result of the length of time in the fictive present it encompasses. Whereas in Part I the relatively short span of three days allowed Fuentes to create the impression that he had generally traced the daily progress of the lives of his characters, the longer period of several months that elapses in Part II necessitates a different approach. In order to accommodate the longer period, Fuentes has inevitably focused on the narration of episodes essential to the development of the plot. The narrative is therefore subject to further fragmentation, since what might have occurred in the interval between those episodes is, of course, omitted. Moreover, this form of fragmentation of the fictive present is yet further enhanced by the frequent omission of clear indications that might allow the exact chronological relationship among the different episodes to be established. It is not clear, for instance, exactly how much time elapses between the end of Part I and the beginning of Part II. Similarly, references within the text such as to "el domingo siguiente" (p. 195) or to an event that is described as occurring "a esa misma hora" (p. 215), however common, are, in reality, no more than the minimum required to retain a basic sense of continuity. For the most part, therefore, the reader is made aware of the passage of time solely through the causal sequence of events. The numerous references contained in the text to specify the hour ("Eran las doce del día", p. 219), or the general time of day ("el sol se había puesto", p. 252) at which events occur are essentially descriptive in nature and insufficient to establish the distance in time that separates the occurrence of one event from that of another. Their importance, in common with what we have already identified as a characteristic of the first part of the novel, is to emphasize a cyclical rather than a linear progression. From the point of view of the flow of time, it is thus more relevant to observe that events occur at a significant moment of a cycle (in the morning, at noon, or at night), than simply to establish the distance in time between them. Indeed, it is precisely because of the emphasis given to the representation of time in a cyclical form that the references required to establish a clear linear chronology are lacking.

It is nonetheless possible to detect a degree of attention to linear chronology. For example, from an oblique reference to an incident of Part I, the reader discovers that several months have already elapsed in Part II. The widow of Juan Morales, the taxi driver killed in Part I, speaks to her dead husband: ". . . porque te vas más lejos cada día, ya no puedo tocarte con los ojos, como hacía en los primeros meses después que te enterramos" (p. 217). Although not as precisely as one might wish, this reference at least allows the reader to envisage the total period of time that has elapsed. Thus, when the month of September is later referred to ("el aire limpio de septiembre", p.335), the first direct reference to a date, the reader is able to situate the action of the beginning of the novel in the early months of 1951. The first, exact historical date, 15 September, 1951 occurs at the end of Part II. The events of this day, on which the independence of Mexico is commemorated, are described in much greater detail, and the pace of the action is considerably slower than previously. Objective time therefore acquires greater prominence as it becomes more necessary than in earlier segments of the novel to indicate chronological continuity. References to time mark the progress of the day: "Desde las seis de la tarde . . ." (p. 386); "después de las doce de la noche . . . " (p. 397). Lapses of time between fragments are shorter and fewer, radical fragmentation is abandoned, and the chronology of the fictive present is reestablished in a manner similar to that prevailing in a more traditional narrative form.

The difference in the narrative at this point and the greater attention paid to showing a clear sequence of events are doubtlessly due to the historical importance of this particular date, but they are also the consequence of the fact that the moment of climax of the action has arrived. All previous incidents have led to this moment of crisis: the decline of Robles; the death and sacrifice of other principal characters, Norma, Zamacona, Beto, and the baby Juanito. Moreover, the last chapters of Part II deal almost exclusively with Federico Robles and the detailed narration of his downfall. It could even be said that Robles is the principal focus of the action of the novel. Hence the simplification of the narrative and the abandonment of previous models are undoubtedly a reflection of an endeavour to concentrate more fully on a single character and the final sequence of events that affect his life.

Part III of La región más transparente deals almost exclusively with the fictive present, which is not subject to the same fragmentation evident in Parts I and II. When changes of space and time are encompassed by the narrative they occur far less abruptly than in earlier parts of the novel. The narrative is therefore somewhat more traditional, and the relationship between Part III and the two preceding parts is obtained principally through the continuity of theme and character. In this respect, Bobó's parties and the characters who attend them play a central role. That much time has elapsed since the end of Part II is evident from the reference to April of 1954 (p. 436), at the beginning of the first chapter, indicative of the passage of three years, and from the fact that the characters on whom the party-goers focus their attention are representatives of a younger generation, in some cases the children of those who had earlier figured quite prominently. This kind of continuity in the plot, combined with reference both to past events narrated in the novel and to what occurred in the interval between the second and third parts, is sufficient to maintain the illusion of a progressively unfolding fictive present. Nevertheless, once the chronological point of departure of the third part has been established, there is little subsequent indication of chronology. Apart from the date cited at the beginning of Part III, it is known only that the final events of the novel take place in December: "El frío viento de diciembre arrastró a Cienfuegos, con pies veloces, por la avenida, por la ciudad . . . " (p. 453). The reader is perhaps surprised to learn at the end of Part III that so much time has elapsed since its beginning, for the fact is that the passage of time, as in earlier parts of the novel, is to be deduced principally from the causal chain of events. That is to say that the reader is aware that time advances, but does not know by what stages or how rapidly.

The third part of the novel is the only one bounded by precisely stated historical dates. That is to say that the reader knows that the action of this part of the novel begins in April and ends in December. It may be that these precise dates are given, in the text of the novel as well as in its index, because Part II is not central to the basic action but serves rather as an epilogue than as a dénoument of the action. As such, it may be intended to appear more factual, and also may be allowed to differ substantially from the pattern established up to this point. The change in narrative style and in structure would confirm this. More importantly, the fact that Part III serves as an epilogue is indicated through the revelation of the reestablishment of a social class, the world of the "International Set" and of wealthy businessmen, which had been decimated by the end of Part II. In this light, it is an epilogue clearly indicating a rebirth, the re-emergence of a particular social class through Betina Régules and Jaime

Ceballos.

Las buenas conciencias

Las buenas conciencias represents a substantial departure from *La región más transparente* with respect to many aspects of narrative technique. Certainly one of the circumstances that gives rise to this situation is the fundamental difference in focus of their respective narratives. Whereas in *La región más transparente* Fuentes made many characters the focus of his attention in an endeavour to portray the complex society of Mexico City, in *Las buenas conciencias* he concentrates on a single character and most of the narrative is seen from his standpoint. This distinction is particularly important insofar as the representation of the fictive present is concerned. As we have already seen, the development of a fictive present in *La región más transparente* encompasses a total period of four years. It not only traces the lives of many characters, but its implications are enhanced by the intercalation of extended passages belonging to the fictive past and its progress is characterized by the narration of incidents that are understood to have occurred simultaneously. By contrast, the total period of time encompassed by the fictive present in *Las buenas conciencias* amounts to a brief moment of recollection, attributed to a single character, that provides the framework for the narration of a century of time belonging to the fictive past. The principle of suspending the present in order to introduce the past is undoubtedly similar in both novels, but the extent to which it is implemented in *Las buenas conciencias* accounts for a considerable difference.

The fictive present of *Las buenas conciencias* consists solely of the time taken by Jaime Ceballos to "remember" what is, in effect, the entire plot of the novel. That the novel does consist of his memories is apparent from the italicized passage at the beginning: "Recordaría. Repetiría los nombres, las historias . . . La casa y la familia. Guanajuato. Repetiría los nombres, las historias" (p. 9), phrases which are also sufficiently ambiguous to indicate that Jaime will both recall the past and repeat it through his own experiences. Moreover, the italicized introduction to the novel also contains an indication that Jaime's memory will reach into the past even beyond his own childhood, in order to recollect the entire history of his family in Guanajuato: ". . . primero debía recordarlos tal como se reflejaban desde las paredes de su padre, en los daguerrotipos desteñidos" (p. 9).

Given that the novel consists of recollections that pass through Jaime's mind, the time encompassed by a fictive present is a very limited period, the shortest of all such periods in Fuentes' novels. The time taken by Jaime to remember all of the events while walking back to the family home of the Ceballos after saying goodbye to his friend Juan Manuel, may be a few seconds, a few minutes, or half an hour. There is no precise indication as to the period of time involved, principally because what is happening in the objective world of Jaime's surroundings is less important than the recollections passing through his mind. Hence, the only reference to an objective point of the fictive present is that contained in the very first line of the novel which serves the sole purpose of providing a minimal context for Jaime's recollections: "Jaime Ceballos no olvidaría esa noche de junio" (p. 9). The flow of time in the novel itself, in the narrative that follows the italicized introductory passage, not only belongs to the past but is encapsulated within those moments of a night in June. The fact that this period of past time is narrated by a third person, omniscient narrator rather than in the first person by Jaime Ceballos himself does not detract from this situation. Such a technique is, in any event, characteristic of Fuentes' manner of portraying the process of memory in his early works. Hence the total period of time in the fictive present that elapses in the novel is still no more than it takes Jaime to recall all that has occurred in the past and has led to the moment when he gives himself up to his memories. Some comment on the overall chronology of the novel will serve to establish the point further.

From the point of view of chronology, the opening scene of the novel in which Jaime returns home appropriately belongs to the conclusion. This fact is confirmed by the repetition at the end of the novel of a paragraph that already appeared at the beginning:

> Caminó de regreso a la casa de los antepasados. Había salido la luna, y Guanajuato le devolvía un reflejo violento desde las cúpulas y las rejas y los empedrados. La mansión de cantera de la familia Ceballos abría su gran zaguán verde para recibir a Jaime. (pp. 9-10 and 190-191)

A number of purposes are served by the repetition of this paragraph. It confirms that the fictive present of the novel has undergone no significant development and that the extended period of past time that elapses between the first and second appearance of the same paragraph is encapsulated within a static present time.

Yet, although the fictive present undergoes no significant chronological development in the novel, the present itself should not be dismissed as irrelevant. It should be stressed that since the entire novel is, in effect, the history of a single moment, an account of how one particular night in the life of Jaime Ceballos came about, the present must be seen in terms of the past. When Jaime Ceballos returns home, he symbolically integrates himself into and undertakes to renew the entire history of his family that he has reviewed in his mind. Hence, not unlike comparable moments in La región más transparente, the moment of time in the fictive present recorded in Las buenas conciencias is more significant because it embodies the continuation or repetition of a cycle than because it occupies a specific position in a linear historical chronology.

La muerte de Artemio Cruz

Insofar as the fictive present is concerned, La muerte de Artemio Cruz shares some characteristics with both of the novels already discussed. As in Las buenas conciencias, the fictive present in La muerte de Artemio Cruz is a means of encapsulating the past and of creating the impression that the present is a culmination of that past. Consequently, and in a manner similar to the earlier novel, the fictive present is suspended in order to admit the past. The similarity may not be pursued further, however. Whereas the pseudo-chronological duration of present time is minimal and relatively unimportant in *Las buenas conciencias*, in *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* the fictive present is not a negligible element and is subject to some chronological development. While the fictive present of *Las buenas conciencias* is suspended at length in a single instance, it is regularly interrupted throughout *La muerte de Artemio Cruz*, much in the manner of *La región más transparente*, and is the product of very particular circumstances. In *Las buenas conciencias*, the period of the fictive present that does exist can be fairly readily calculated because, although the narrative consists of the implicit recollections of Jaime Ceballos, his own consciousness does not directly intervene in their presentation. The period of time covered can therefore be objectively calculated. In *La muerte de Artemio Cruz*, it is not possible to obtain a clearly objective measurement of the passage of present time simply because present time is perceived only through the somewhat erratic consciousness of Artemio Cruz, who is a dying man and in the process of losing contact with objective reality. The fictive present and its development in *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* are thus to be perceived by the reader only in the same terms as they are perceived by Artemio Cruz. There is, therefore, no entirely objective chronological time frame, such as is perceptible in the previous novels, within which the fictive present is developed. On the contrary, the reader must take into account two of the fundamentally subjective aspects of Artemio Cruz's experience: his perception of the objective reality that surrounds him, including some references to the passage of time, and his purely sensory perceptions of his own physical condition.

In effect, the subjective elements of _La muerte de Artemio Cruz_ result in the more extended use of the interior monologue in the fictive present than in Fuentes' earlier novels. Employed minimally in _Las buenas conciencias_,[5] the interior monologue is slightly more frequent in _La región más transparente_, where, in the fictive present, it is principally a function of the mysterious character Ixca Cienfuegos, whose thoughts and musings run throughout the novel like a murmur beneath the surface of the action. There are several examples of this stream of consciousness technique (pp. 19-20, 29-39, 36, 42-43, 377-378, 407, 450-470), many of which occur as comments on the characters and situations which Cienfuegos "oversees":

> Ixca Cienfuegos entró en la sala, se detuvo y encendió, con una mueca, un cigarrillo

> primero, dejarse llevar; no hacer preguntas, no ver caras: dejarse llevar por el rumor y las sombras, por los borrones. Cambio de luces. Amarillo. Les va bien. Debía instalar Bobó unos rayos X. ¿Hacen falta? Espejos. Los borrones se reproducen al infinito. Luces, espaldas, talles, tantas axilas tantas veces rasuradas, la conciencia en los senos, la mecánica de expeler humo, dejàrse llevar, los tufos. . . . (pp. 29-30)

The interior monologues are not limited to Cienfuegos, however. The fictive present is also represented through the interior monologues of other characters:

> Juan Morales se rascaba la cicatriz rojiza en la frente no es fácil, veinte años de ruletear de noche --si lo sabré yo. Ahí está mi bandera en la frente, como quien dice. Cuánto borracho, cuánto hijo de su pelona: que a Azcapotzalco, que a la Buenos Aires, tres cuatro de la mañana. Y de repente le sorrojan a uno la cabeza, o hay que bajarse y bajar al cliente, y se acaba con las costillas rotas. Todo por veinte pesos diarios. Pero ya se acabó. (p. 36)

In general, the passages in which these thoughts are presented are italicized in the text. They are narrated in the first person, and the thoughts are often linked through free association of ideas. In the case of Cienfuegos' monologues, his thoughts generally appear less organized than those of other characters which are, for the most part, relatively close to speech forms.

Since Artemio Cruz himself is the narrator of the present tense sequences and no attempt is made to summarize his thoughts, almost all of the fictive present in La muerte de Artemio Cruz is presented through interior monologues. His thoughts are "staged", presented as if the man's mind were open to scrutiny. Moreover, his thoughts seem to occur at random and are sometimes meaningless. Free association is employed to the extreme, and, in general, Cruz's thoughts become increasingly dis-associated from each other as his mind disintegrates with the approach of death:

> Yo he despertado . . . otra vez . . . pero esta vez . . . sí . . . en este automóvil, en esta carroza . . . no . . . no sé . . . corre sin hacer ruido . . . ésta no debe ser todavía la conciencia verdadera . . . por más que abra los ojos no puedo distinguirlos . . . objetos, personas . . . huevos blancos y luminosos que ruedan frente a mis ojos . . . pared de leche que me separa del mundo. (p. 270)

This novel is the best example of the use of pure stream of consciousness techniques in Fuentes' early works, in the sense that the first person narrator is employed and the thoughts are presented as they occur, not in summary. As a result of Fuentes' use of this method, the fictive present in La muerte de Artemio Cruz cannot, strictly speaking, be measured in objective terms. It acquires the subjective connotations of the dying man and is measurable only to the extent that it is possible to place some objective value on his own perceptions.

La muerte de Artemio Cruz comprises a total of thirty-eight narrative segments arranged in twelve successive groups of three, with two additional segments at the conclusion of the novel. The character of each segment is determined by its narrative voice, the first, second or third person, so that each group of three segments in fact consists of a triad of different voices. The experiences of Artemio Cruz are thereby presented from the perspective of three different points of view and three corresponding periods of time, the past, present and future. The segments narrated in the first person are mainly in the present tense and pertain to the fictive present of the novel, the hours during which Artemio is dying. They convey the most superficial level of Artemio's consciousness, that of the dying man whose thoughts and sensory perceptions are recorded as reactions to immediate sensations and his immediate environment within the context of his fluctuating state of consciousness. The majority of the action of the fictive present, therefore, though lacking in objectivity, is contained in the first person segments, but the second person fragments, representing the subconscious of the dying man, also contain some important indications pertinent to the creation of the fictive present. The exact date of the day before the beginning of the narrative (p. 13) and Artemio's exact age (p. 14) are revealed in passages narrated in the second person. Such passages also contain some references to the actions performed in the fictive present by characters other than Artemio Cruz (Catalina's attention to Artemio, p. 91, for example), and it is in a second person segment that the final details of Artemio's death are narrated (pp. 315-316). However, unlike the segments narrated in the first person, in which thoughts are presented in interior monologues, the second person narrative voice provides summaries of Artemio's present thoughts and actions:

> Ahora estarás pensando que bastará cerrar los ojos para tenerla. Sonreirás, pese al dolor que vuelve a insinuarse, y tratarás de estirar un poco las piernas. Alguien te tocará la mano, pero tú no responderás a esa ¿caricia, atención, angustia, cálculo? (p. 35)

Since the greater part of the fictive present, the scenes in the bedroom, the ambulance and the hospital, is contained in the first person narrative segments and is filtered through Artemio's consciousness, it does not really correspond to an objective scheme of time. References either to the time of day or to other equivalent means of obtaining an objective measurement of the passage of time are almost entirely lacking. It is generally known that the fictive present of the novel encompasses a period of approximately twelve hours, not because there is any specific reference to the fact in the text, but because Carlos Fuentes himself referred to that figure in a summary of the work he made in the course of a conversation with Emmanuel Carballo.[6] Since it is not possible to deduce, from the novel itself, exactly how many hours of present time elapse, the reader is left to his own speculation. The scant references to the time of day at which the events belonging to the fictive present take place, do, however, make it possible to detect a certain general movement from the morning to the night of the same day. That the novel begins in the morning is evident on the first page, in a reference to the attack which precipitated the death of Artemio Cruz:

> Quizás --he estado inconsciente, recuerdo con un sobresalto-- durante esas horas comí sin saberlo. Porque apenas clareaba cuando alargué la mano y arrojé --también sin quererlo-- el teléfono al piso. . . . (p. 9)

By the same token, there are a few passing references that appear to indicate that the action is continued into the night. On occasions, Artemio Cruz expresses his awareness of the passage of time: "Es de noche, ¿verdad?" (p. 41); "Antes he visto el día apagarse detrás de los ventanales y he escuchado ese rumor piadoso de las cortinas" (p. 56). On other occasions, this sense of lapsed time is communicated by other characters. The following snatch of conversation between the doctors is particularly indicative, for instance, because it would appear to refer the reader back to the beginning of the novel: "¿Cuándo orinó por última vez? --Esta mañana . . . no, hace dos horas, sin darse cuenta" (p. 223).

The progress from morning to night is discernible above all through the multitude of domestic dramas that are enacted during that lapse of time in the bedroom of the dying man and are recorded through his consciousness. However, it is difficult to establish their sequence because they are often jumbled in Artemio's mind, to the point that some actions appear to be repeated. In effect, it is often difficult to distinguish between scenes that are truly repeated and those that recur only in Artemio's mind. Yet, in spite of this confusion, these actions serve to indicate that certain changes are taking place and therefore that time is passing. For example, at different moments in time several people arrive and some depart: Padilla, the priest, the doctors, Artemio's granddaughter, his son-in-law, all move in and out or about the room. Padilla's arrival with the tape-recorder causes a minor battle of wills until Catalina and Teresa finally accede to Artemio's desire to hear the recording of the previous day's business negotiations. The actual playing of the recording, reflecting the chronological arrangement of a past event, is in itself the best indicator of chronological movement in the present time. Artemio's awareness of the passage of time, mainly through the comings and goings of other characters, is another clear indicator. He is aware, for example, that his granddaughter, Gloria, had been in the room and remarks that it has been some time since she departed: "Gloria se fue hace un buen rato con el hijo de Padilla" (p. 142).

The changes in Artemio's physical condition are also particularly indicative of the movement in time. The ebb and flow of his pain, for instance, are clearly shown throughout the novel, and reveal the passage of time: "Ay, con un grito. Ay, grito . . . me duele"(p. 12); "No me siento tan mal ahora" (p. 30); "El dolor va pasando" (p. 120); " . . . no lo aguanto . . . grito . . . debo gritar . . . me sujetan . . ." (p. 307). Similarly, his sleeping (often induced by injections) and waking, the move to the hospital as his condition worsens, and the final operation, all indicate that a certain amount of time has passed since the first narrative segment.

In spite of this perceptible movement in time as the last day in the life of Artemio Cruz unfolds, there is no attempt to establish the fictive present of the novel in terms of a rigorous chronology of events. On the contrary, there is a conscious endeavour to destroy all sense of chronology. The deliberate and consistent fragmentation of the action obtained through a number of different effects, is obviously one device employed to this end. Primarily, and most evidently, the division of the text into thirty-eight parts of uneven length and the use of three distinct narrative voices have the effect of fragmenting the very fabric of the novel, an effect which is enhanced through the dislocation of the causal relationship connecting the different narrative segments. The order of the segments in the text, therefore, reveals no immediately recognizable chronological sequence. It is often even difficult to detect the links which establish the continuity of a fictive present in the first person narrative segments. Evidently, this fragmentation and dislocation is a deliberate attempt to portray the disjointed thoughts of the wavering consciousness of a dying man.

Repetition is used with equal effect, to the extent that the majority of the incidents narrated in the first person are repeated. What is particularly interesting in this respect is that only some of the actions are in fact re-enacted, while others suffer repetition only in the confused mind of the old man. Those actions that do indeed recur, if their recurrence is clearly indicated, should have little bearing on the fragmented character of the novel. However, such incidents are so well integrated with repetitions that occur in Artemio's mind and are a result of his confusion, that the overall effect is one of a continual backtracking to what took place before, almost totally effacing any progress in the action. The constantly repeated passage in which Artemio demands that the window be opened ("--Abran la ventana. --No, no. Puedes resfriarte y complicarlo todo."), occurring on pages 11, 32, 58, 59, 117, 138, 143, 162, 166, 202, 221, and 242, is a case in point. It is never clear whether this request and the reaction it produces, which appear at least once, sometimes twice, in each of the first ten first person segments, actually take place or not. Clearly, they are sometimes repeated merely in Artemio's mind. However, the effect is always the same: the reader is suddenly returned to a point which he thought he had passed, thereby giving rise to a strange cyclical effect, similar to the feeling of a trap from which there is no escape. And this is precisely the point: Artemio feels trapped by his approaching death, and his desire to have the window opened is symbolic of his wish to escape.

On other occasions, mainly on account of the nature of the incident itself, it is relatively clear that a particular incident took place only once but is repeated in Artemio's consciousness. The passages referring to Padilla's arrival with the tape-recorder and the resultant struggle with Catalina and Teresa ("Ah, Padilla, acércate. ¿Trajiste la grabadora? . . . --No, licenciado, no podemos permitirlo. --Es una costumbre de muchos años, señora"), which occur with slight variations on pages 11, 29, 57, 203, and 221, and those referring to Gloria's arrival ("--Acércate, hijita, que te reconozca. Dile tu nombre. --Soy . . . soy Gloria . . .") on pages 11, 162, 202, 222 and 242, are particular examples of this phenomenon. As with the reference to Artemio's wish to have the window open, it is never clear at what moment the real event actually took place; what appear to be repetitions in Artemio's mind could well be "forecasts" taking place before the event itself.

The effect, however, is that the reader is again constantly forced to return to a point in time which he had thought to be long past.

In addition to the incidents repeatedly enacted in Artemio's mind, there are examples of several passages which recur throughout the first person narrative, in the manner of a leitmotif. These passages stand out not only because they re-occur but also because, when they first appear, they are somewhat enigmatic and do not seem to have any bearing on the action of the fictive present. For example, the repeated reference to "el carpintero y la virgen" (pp. 30, 56, 88) is an image apparently triggered in Artemio's mind by the appearance of the priest who has come to administer the last rites. It is never explained any further, and remains a vague, recurring echo of Artemio's obsession, in an irreverent allusion to the immaculate conception.

It is only later in the novel, that some of these references are clarified as memories of past events which, although fully recounted in the second or third person narrative, are not elaborated in the first person segments. The reference to an incident involving Artemio and his son ("--Esa mañana lo esperaba con alegría. Cruzamos el río a caballo"), for example, occurs in each of the first person narrative segments except the last, but is only fully elaborated in one of the second person narrative segments (pp. 224-228). By the same token, the following reference to the death of Lorenzo in the Spanish Civil War, elaborated in a third person segment (p. 241) in which a full account of the incident is given, is repeated verbatim on the same page in the first person narrative:

> . . . que a pesar del cadáver abandonado, que a pesar del hielo y el sol que lo sepultaron, que a pesar de los ojos abiertos para siempre, devorados por las aves, hay algo peor. (p. 243)

Repetition in the fictive present is not limited to these examples, however. Numerous phrases, expressions, images, thoughts of Artemio and utterances of other characters constantly recur in the first person narrative. In effect, approximately two-thirds of each first person section is to some extent a repetition of what has previously occurred in the text. All sense of progress is thereby considerably limited, since in each case there is little novelty. It is only towards the end, in the final three first person segments, that the cycle of repetition in the narrative is broken and the action accelerates. Artemio is moved to the hospital, undergoes an operation, and finally dies. Repetition, then, not only serves to disrupt any semblance of chronological sequence in the fictive present, but contributes to the presence of an increasingly prevalent element in Fuentes' novels, the cyclical character of time, derived from its constant repetition.

One further means of disrupting the chronological sequence of events remains to be discussed, Padilla's tape-recorder. We have already referred to this device as one of the few indicators of chronological movement in the fictive present. But the tape-recorder has a dual function. It can record the past and insert it into the present, thereby exemplifying the rigid chronology of both times, when re-played in the present time exactly as recorded in the past. But the recorder can also make time appear to stop, as for example, when the playing stops because the tape needs to be turned to the other side: "¿Qué pasa, Padilla? Hombre, Padilla. ¿Qué cacofonía es ésa? Hombre Padilla. --Se acabó el carrete. Un instante. Sigue del otro lado" (p. 118). Paradoxically, it is also because it records past time that the tape-recorder appears to make time repeat itself. It can take the reader back to the previous day, but it can also be stopped, and it can be replayed. Fuentes goes beyond these more normal functions of the tape-recorder, however, bestowing on it the remarkable ability of making time appear to reverse:

> . . . --ah, chilla la cinta, ajústala bien, Padilla, escuché mi voz en reversa: chilla como una cacatúa--. (p. 57)
>
> Ese ruido de mi propia voz, mi voz reversible, sí, que vuelve a chillar y puede escucharse corriendo hacia atrás, con un chillido de ardilla, pero mi voz como mi nombre que sólo tiene once letras . . . me suena mi nombre que chilla, se detiene, corre en sentido contrario. (p. 118)

It is a possibility that is welcomed by Artemio Cruz, whose only desire is to reverse the present course of events leading inevitably to his death.

The use of these devices --fragmentation, repetition, the tape-recorder-- leads one to believe that, more than in the earlier novels, in La muerte de Artemio Cruz Fuentes intended to de-emphasize the chronological sequence in the fictive present as much as possible. Together with the filtering of the action through the character's mind, the total technique can therefore be seen as an attempt to present something other than an objective interpretation of reality. In the mind of the dying man who sometimes loses consciousness, sometimes falls asleep, sometimes is delirious, there can be no true course of chronology and only a distorted sense of objective reality. Time is completely confused by him, and Fuentes makes it appear to be so for the reader also. Objective reality, objective time, hold little significance for Artemio at this point. He would like to be able to stop the inevitable relentlessness of time which can lead only to his imminent death. He wishes only to recapture the past, and failing that, to retain forever the present moment. And yet, ironically, there is a sense in which objective reality is of prime importance to this man who is losing his grip on life. It is this need to maintain some hold on the reality which is escaping him that explains the presence of any semblance of objective time in the fictive present.

Aura

Notwithstanding the fantastic nature of its story, an objective sense of time is more completely and more straightforwardly conveyed in Aura than in any of Carlos Fuentes' other early novels. The events are narrated in sequential order and all take place in a fictive present. They are contained within the relatively short period of the lapse of five days in the life of Felipe Montero and are narrated without interruption either to admit the fictive past or to include events occurring simultaneously. In effect, the action of the novel is developed on the basis of a very precise and meticulously constructed chronology, so that the reader is constantly aware of the passage of time.

On the first day, Felipe reads an advertisement in the newspaper for the position of historian. Almost immediately on the second page, a time shift advances the narrative to the following day (p. 10), to present Felipe reading the same, slightly altered advertisement for a second time: "Vivirás ese día, idéntico a los demás y no volverás a recordarlo sino al día siguiente, cuando . . . abras el periódico" (p. 10). The first day is thus dismissed with a brief comment on its lack of importance --"idéntico a los demás"-- as the narrator continues to detail the events of the second day. The mundane, routine reality of Felipe's existence, however, has already been established in a detailed description of the beginning of the day which forms the basis of the chapter: he reads the newspaper as he smokes a cigarette and drinks a cup of coffee in a café. He then picks up his briefcase, leaves a tip and walks to the corner to take the bus. The detailed account of his actions continues:

> Esperas el autobús, enciendes un cigarrillo repites en silencio las fechas que debes memorizar para que esos niños amodorrados te respeten. Tienes que prepararte. El autobús se acerca y tú estás observando las puntas de tus zapatos negros. Tienes

> que prepararte. Metes la mano en el bolsillo, juegas con las monedas de cobre, por fin escoges treinta centavos, los aprietas con el puño y alargas el brazo para tomar firmemente el barrote de fierro del camión que nunca se detiene, saltar, abrirte paso, pagar los treinta centavos, acomodarte difícilmente entre los pasajeros apretujados que viajan de pie, apoyar tu mano derecha en el pasamanos, apretar el portafolio contra el costado y colocar distraídamente la mano izquierda sobre la bolsa trasera del pantalón, donde guardas los billetes. (p. 10)

The remainder of Chapter I is a detailed account of Felipe's entry into the old house and his meeting with Consuelo and Aura, ending with his decision to take the position and to remain in the house. Besides its obvious function of introducing Felipe, and counterposing the kind of existence to which he was accustomed against the new environment in which he will live, Chapter I establishes a pattern and lays a foundation for the development of the rest of the novel. An attention to detailing the routine events of daily life, such as mealtimes and the smoking of cigarettes, is the most important aspect of this foundation.

The same detailed account of routine activities is evident in Chapter II, which begins in the afternoon of the day on which Chapter I ends. Felipe is shown to his room, spends some time inspecting his surroundings, smokes two cigarettes, checks the time, finds his way downstairs to the dining room, has dinner with Aura, smokes another cigarette, and visits Consuelo in her room to discuss his work. In this chapter, however, the precise references to the the time of day constitute a new element: ". . . recuerdas que deben ser cerca de las seis de la tarde" (p. 19); "Lo esperamos a cenar dentro de una hora" (p. 19). With this chapter the routine of Felipe's new existence in the old house becomes fixed, and the events of that routine, such as mealtimes, meetings with Consuelo, begin to serve as a clock for Felipe as well as for the reader.

Chapter III begins on the night of the second day, with Felipe beginning his reading of General Llorente's papers. Once again, Felipe's routine is noted in detail, with the added occurrences of waking and sleeping, getting dressed in the morning and for meals, and his work on the memoirs. Moreover, time is registered in detail: "A los diez minutos . . ." (p. 28); ". . . consultas tu reloj . . ." (p. 31); ". . . una fracción de segundo antes . . ." (p. 33); "Entran diez minutos después . . ." (p. 36).

The action of Chapters IV and V develops on precisely the same routine basis, as the unfolding of time is marked by the clock and by the occurrences which regularly take place in Felipe's life as the fifth day is reached. The combination of precise time references and routine daily occurrences emphasize the linear structure of the novel and make it comparable to the majority of the short stories of Los días enmascarados. Nevertheless, the daily repeated action, beginning with an announcement of the morning and ending with an indication of night, is reminiscent of the cyclical structure discussed with relation to the fictive present of La región más transparente.

Throughout Aura, the importance of the objective value of time is established in several ways. As we have seen, one can easily trace an objective chronological frame in which the action develops. The five days of the action are made to conform loosely to the five chapters of the novel, thus causing the interior structure to correspond with the exterior. Moreover there is a constant reference to time by the clock. The importance of objective time is also evident in the fact that other time levels are not allowed to interrupt the sequence of events as in the novels previously discussed. Although other time values are apparent to some extent in Aura, they are not developed as other narrative times but are seen as part of the present. For example, Felipe's dream, rather than presented directly, is described in summary. That is to say, Felipe's mind as he is dreaming is not seen directly in a stream of consciousness, nor is it portrayed in a description by the dreamer himself. The intervention of the narrator (or the author) is clearly evident in the brief narration of what occurs in the dream. As a consequence, the reader is not forced to leave the objective present and enter the mind time of the character. By the same token, the fictive present is not abandoned when the personal history of General Llorente is referred to, or when the historical data related to his past are given. This past, which plays an important role in the novel because it explains the present for Felipe, is conveyed through the memoirs read by Felipe in a fictive present time.

Although it does not give rise to a narrative time other than the fictive present, the combination of the future tense and the second person narrative does have an effect on the time structure of the novel. It is, in fact, reminiscent of the second person narrative segments in La muerte de Artemio Cruz, which is not surprising since the two novels were published in the same year. There are, however, some basic differences between the two novels in the use of this technique. The second person narrative voice of La muerte de Artemio Cruz, representing the subconscious of the dying man, deals with the fictive present only in some instances in which there are references to specific objective actions occurring within that time frame. In combination with the future tense, it creates a sense of impending doom, of warning to and condemnation of the man whose death is imminent and inevitable. The second person narrative voice of Aura, on the other hand, exists only in the fictive present, and the entire novel is narrated in this form. Even the use of the future tense throughout the novel (in place of the present) does not alter the situation. Because of this fact, one is at first tempted to seek another fictive present, that of the implied first person narrator who addresses Felipe in the second person singular. Yet it is not possible. It soon becomes clear that the narrative voice of Aura is also the subconscious of the protagonist. In La muerte de Artemio Cruz, the technique is well adapted to the obvious "split" in Artemio's character. In Aura, the split in Felipe's character is less obvious, but the technique is also necessary in order to indicate the extent to which Felipe is being unwittingly and reluctantly absorbed into a situation that he does not comprehend and cannot explain. It appears, through the use of the second person narrative, that on his conscious level

Felipe cannot cope with the unreality of his present circumstances; it is left to his subconscious. The future tense indicates that Felipe has been relieved of all responsibility for his actions: he is being told what will happen to him; he has no choice. While this technique considerably enriches the fictive present, it has the effect of decreasing the objectivity of the narrative. This it must do, since the objectivity of events is always somewhat coloured when presented as seen through the subconscious. In this light, then, much of the apparent outer objectivity of the fictive present is belied.

Time in the fictive present of Aura is clearly objective, but the novel deals with non-objective elements to a very considerable degree. That is to say, it has an underlying sense of "unreality": Aura and Consuelo, as it turns out, are the same individual; Felipe finds himself gradually changing into the General, who has been dead for sixty years. How then is the preponderance of objective time explained? It appears that objective time is of particular importance to Felipe. As he becomes involved in the unreal world of the old woman, he seeks increasingly to attach himself to something fixed and "real". He feels himself losing contact with common reality and turns to his watch to assure himself a grip on that reality. He is portrayed, for example, as constantly "checking" his watch. At the end, however, Felipe admits to himself the falseness of the so-called objective time symbolized by his watch:

> No volverás a mirar tu reloj, ese objeto inservible que mide falsamente un tiempo acordado a la vanidad humana, esas manecillas que marcan tediosamente las largas horas inventadas para engañar el verdadero tiempo, el tiempo que corre con la velocidad insultante, mortal, que ningún reloj puede medir. Una vida, un siglo, cincuenta años: ya no te será posible imaginar esas medidas mentirosas, ya no te será posible tomar entre las manos ese polvo sin cuerpo. (p. 57)

This represents Felipe's final moment of resistance to being absorbed into Consuelo's world of insanity. He has been overcome by a reality and a time more powerful, more real than that to which he had been accustomed.

It may be said that, in the above passage, Fuentes makes an assertion about time in his other novels as well as in Aura. In each case, he sets up a more or less objective time scheme in the fictive present, only to destroy it subsequently, to illustrate its irrelevance, and its invalidity. In the first three novels, it is destroyed through fragmentation, the semblance of simultaneity, time shifts and space shifts, and through emphasis on the cyclical movement of time. In Aura little of this is evident.

It is the theme of the novel above all, and to a lesser extent the use of the second person narrative, which belie the appearance of objectivity in the temporal structure. They contradict and negate its linear form.

NOTES

[1] A.A. Mendilow, Time and the Novel (New York, 1972), pp. 96-97.

[2] Mendilow, p. 64.

[3] Mendilow, p. 65.

[4] Mendilow, p. 71.

[5] The passages of interior monologue in Las buenas conciencias (pp. 67-68, 70-71) occur within the fictive past narrative and will therefore be dealt with in Chapter II of this study.

[6] Emmanual Carballo, "Conversación con Carlos Fuentes", "La Cultura en México, Núm. 14, Suplemento de Siempre (23 mayo, 1962), p. vi.

CHAPTER II

THE FICTIVE PAST

Our definition and discussion of the fictive present rightly lead us to assume that there are other fictive times of considerable significance in Fuentes' early works. With the exception of a few brief glimpses of future times, the greater part of Fuentes' narratives can generally be said to be devoted to the past. As a point of departure for this chapter, it is therefore appropriate to recall A.A. Mendilow's definition of the fictive present and to note the distinction he has made between it and the fictive past:

> There is as a rule one point of time in the story which serves as a point of reference. From this point the fictive present may be considered as beginning. . . . Everything that antedates that point, as for instance exposition, is felt as a fictive past.[1]

As Mendilow's definition makes clear, it is not possible to speak of a fictive past except in the context of its relationship to a fictive present. The past to which we refer, then, is not necessarily past for the author or reader (although it may well be, and usually is), but is essentially a past seen from the perspective of the fictive present. In this sense, the fictive present can be considered a kind of "screen" separating the reader from the fictive past, an "obstacle" which must be circumvented by the author who wishes to make the past come alive for his reader. As a result, the presentation of the fictive past in the novel and short story requires the use of narrative devices and methods which pose technical problems of an order quite different from those evident in the narration of the fictive present. Since the intrusion of the past represents a disruption of the chronological continuity of the narrative, the author must necessarily have recourse to particular techniques in order to assist the reader in making the appropriate psychological adjustments that will permit him to bridge the distance between two different and often widely separated periods of time. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the nature of the fictive past and the techniques employed by Fuentes in making it an integral part of his narrative.

In Fuentes' early novels and short stories, the fictive past is incorporated into the narrative through three basic techniques. At times, the past is referred to through brief descriptions or fleeting allusions. In other instances, the past is the subject of a prolonged narrative in passages which, in the majority of cases, occupy several pages. Finally, the past is often referred to in a less obvious manner in what can be described as either the re-manifestation of the past in the present, or the blending of past and present. In this chapter, only the first two techniques will be analysed, while the third will be more appropriately discussed in the following chapter.

The presentation of the past through brief descriptions or fleeting allusions is common procedure in the more conventional type of novel in which the narrative generally develops with particular attention to the progress of a fictive present and in which the past may be referred to without being narrated in detail. Allusions to the past in this type of fiction are usually limited to the total of whatever exposition of the past is required to place the present action in perspective. Such references are not only brief, but are not usually essential to the subsequent progress of the narrative. However, depending on the narrator's point of view and the type of narrative employed, the techniques used in the presentation of these brief allusions to the past do vary. In many novels narrated in accordance with a conventional chronology, either through a first person narrator or a third person omniscient narrator, the necessary exposition is presented near or at the beginning of the novel and serves only to explain in general terms how the point of departure of the narrative was arrived at. As the narrative continues, describing a progressively developing fictive present, there may occasionally be further references to the past.[2] Such references may occur through the voice of the narrator himself, whether he is identified or remains anonymous, or through the speech of one of the characters in the course of a dialogue. Thus, the nature of these references may depend on the type of narrator who figures in each case. For example, the narrator with a panoramic view of time and space can refer to the past at will, linking it to the present and, sometimes, even to the future. The first person narrator, often more limited in the scope of his omniscience, is generally less free to move back and forth in time convincingly.

Representation of the past through brief descriptions or allusions only occurs in Fuentes' early novels to a minor degree, probably because the majority of these works could hardly be considered conventional in terms of their chronology and because the past is of greater significance to Fuentes than the method allows. The technique is also evident to some extent in several of the short stories of Los días enmascarados. It occurs, for example, in the first two paragraphs of "El que inventó la pólvora" which set the scene for the story to be related by describing what preceded the situation that constitutes the point of departure for the fictive present. The rest of the story is devoted to the development of the fictive present itself. At the beginning of "Chac Mool", the reader is summarily familiarized with the incidents that led to the situation, from which the narrative proper departs:

> Hace poco tiempo, Filiberto murió ahogado en Acapulco. Sucedió en Semana Santa. Aunque despedido de su empleo en la Secretaría, Filiberto no pudo resistir la tentación burocrática de ir, como todos los años, a la pensión alemana, comer el choucrout endulzado por el sudor de la cocina tropical, bailar el sábado de gloria en la Quebrada, y sentirse "gente conocida" en el oscuro anonimato vespertino de la Playa de Hornos. Claro sabíamos que en su juventud había nadado bien, pero ahora, a los cuarenta, y tan desmejorado como se le veía, ¡intentar salvar, y a medianoche, un trecho tan largo! (p. 7)

Unlike many novels and short stories with a conventionally linear chronology, however, this is not the total extent of the relevance of the past in "Chac Mool". Considerable importance is given to the past as the story develops, but, as will be shown later, other methods of referring to it are employed.

By the same token, although a great deal of the narrative of La región más transparente is devoted to the relation of past events, very little of that past is conveyed by means of the kind of allusions to which we are referring. The novel does begin, however, with a very brief expository reference by Ixca Cienfuegos ("Mi nombre es Ixca Cienfuegos. Nací y vivo en México, D.F.", p. 19), the first person narrator of the first two and one-half pages. Later, the past of Gladys García is alluded to in a similarly fleeting manner, but by the third person omniscient narrator:

> Aquí había nacido Gladys, en los palacios huecos de la meseta, en la gran ciudad chata y asfixiada, en la ciudad extendiéndose cada vez más como una tiña irrespetuosa. Un día quisieron llevarla a Cuernavaca unos abarroteros con automóvil, y el coche se descompuso en Tlálpam. (p. 24)

Another of these brief allusions to the past occurs in a dialogue, in Pimpinela's conversation with Charlotte García:

> Recuerdo que mi abuelita decía que igual que la artistocracia porfiriana veía con horror la entrada a México de los Villas y los Zapatas, ella y las viejas familias vieron entrar a Díaz y a los suyos el siglo pasado. Entonces las gentes decentes eran lerdistas. Aunque también ellos se habían hecho ricos con los bienes del clero. (pp.165-166)

In *Aura*, there is just a single allusion to the past of the type to which we are referring, contained in the brief exposition at the beginning of the novel concerning Felipe Montero's background: "Se solicita Felipe Montero, antiguo becario en la Sorbona, historiador cargado de datos inútiles, acostumbrado a exhumar papeles amarillentos, profesor auxiliar en escuelas particulares, novecientos pesos mensuales" (p. 9). It is the minimum exposition necessary to provide a backdrop for the action. Other references to the past in *Aura*, such as Felipe's reading of the General's memoirs, are of a different nature and of greater significance in the total structure of the novel.

Although the examples given above occur in a variety of narrative forms (first person narrator, third person omniscient narrator, character in dialogue, second person omniscient narrator in *Aura*), the general effect in terms of the presentation of the past is the same. There is no attempt to dwell on or to maintain the reader's interest in those particular moments of the past. Since these brief references to moments from the past are merely the product of the narrator's relative mobility, his ability to move from present to past and vice versa, they do not demand more elaborate techniques in order for them to be brought to the reader's attention.

As has already been stated, brief references to the past in Fuentes' early novels and short stories are relatively few. In general, the interpolation of the past is much more significant than the simple introduction of brief expository statements and passing references used merely to complete the reader's information and help connect episodes. The first three novels and one of the stories of *Los días enmascarados* contain a great deal of sustained narration of the fictive past, which, in the majority of cases, not only occupies a large portion of the text, but is also integrated into the narrative as a whole and has a most significant role in its structure. Such narrations of the past, partly because they occupy so much of the text, place considerable emphasis on time as a subjective element. Subjective time, already discussed briefly with reference to the first person narrative sections of *La muerte de Artemio Cruz*, should be clearly distinguished from objective time. A.A. Mendilow refers to it as psychological or perceptual time and describes it as follows:

> . . . the inner or psychological [standard of time-measurement] . . . involves the estimation of time by individual values rather than by objective scales . . .
> It is, in other words, a relative, interior time estimated by constantly varying values, in contrast to the

> exterior time measured by fixed standards.[3]

The occurrence of a subjective sense of time results from the suspension or manipulation of objective scales of measurement of the passage of time and may be apparent in the novel in several ways. Characters may be shown to be particularly conscious of or sensitive to the conflict between their own, inner sense of time and the inexorable passage of exterior, objective time. Felipe Montero's distressed observation near the end of *Aura* is one of the best examples of what, in effect, amounts to a description of subjective time itself:

> No volverás a mirar tu reloj, ese objeto inservible que mide falsamente un tiempo acordado a la vanidad humana, esas manecillas que marcan tediosamente las largas horas inventadas para engañar el verdadero tiempo, el tiempo que corre con la velocidad insultante, mortal, que ningún reloj puede medir. (p. 57)

Alternatively, the manifestation of a subjective sense of time may be the direct result of a particular type of narrative, such as a memory sequence, dreams, the free flow of imagination, the thought processes, or the stream of consciousness of a character. All these examples have a significant impact on the time structure of a novel because they imply that portions of its narrative do not pertain to the objective chronological flow of the fictive present. The time that elapses within a memory sequence, a dream, or in any other context in which the fictive present is no longer objectively measurable corresponds to a different scale. In each of these cases, the focus falls on the interior processes of the individual. The flow of the character's thoughts and the time which elapses in his mind become important, and the objective flow of events in an external frame of reference is temporarily suspended.

The degree of subjectivity attained in the instances to which we have referred vary considerably according to the narrative technique employed. Description of the character's thoughts by a narrator, for example, is less subjective than the process whereby the reader has direct access to the workings of the character's mind as if it were laid bare. The author may describe the thought processes, memory or dream, or he may show them as if he could, in effect, put the mind on stage.[4] In the light of these observations, it is important to discuss narrative technique, particularly point of view. Since it is a question of dealing with events removed in time from the fictive present of the story, it is necessary to examine the different techniques that serve as the vehicles through which such events are brought into the text and given a certain amount of emphasis.

The least subjective form of presentation of the past is that in which, without suspending the present moment of the novel, events are narrated by means of an extract read from memoirs or a diary. This technique has already been mentioned in connection with Felipe's reading of the General's memoirs in Aura. Not only does Felipe's reading occupy a small portion of the total narrative, but this method of incorporating past time into the text does not entail a suspension of objective time similar to that evident in examples to be dealt with later. At the moment in which the events of the past are related, the narrator as well as the reader of the novel remain very much in the fictive present. They are both constantly aware of the distance in time between themselves and the events narrated in the diary.

Description or summary of the memories of a character by a third person omniscient narrator is a somewhat more subjective method. In these cases,the narrator may begin with a phrase such as "he remembered", and continually place himself between the reader and the character who is undergoing the process of recollection. As in the extract from the memoirs contained in Aura, the reader of the novel is not allowed to relocate himself entirely in the past, but is constantly reminded of the distance between the fictive present and the past. In other instances, however, the notion that the past is recuperated by means of the recollection of a character is to some extent effaced and the relationship between the past and present is to some degree severed. That is to say that the past is not necessarily narrated from the perspective of the present but is re-created by a narrator who is not necessarily identifiable. The product, in such instances, is a flashback, which may be cinematographic in nature and encompass the narration of an event from perspectives which, often, could not normally really be remembered as personal experience by a single character. Evidently, in these cases, the memory of the character itself is not actually at work, but the passages of the narrative in question are attributed to it. Indications that a particular character is in the process of remembering must be sought elsewhere in the text other than in the flashback, which contains no internal reference to the effect that it is a memory sequence, has no identifiable narrator, and often no identifiable witness of the events narrated.

Even in a novel in which a third person omniscient narrator predominates, a character may, nonetheless, be allowed to describe his own memories, in the first person and without the interference of the omniscient narrator. In this case, the character may narrate the story of his past to a second character in the course of a dialogue, or his memories may be depicted through an interior monologue. In the latter, the character may even appear to be unconscious of his own thought process when it is made to seem as if the character's mind has been penetrated and that his mind rather than the character himself has been put on stage. The reader understands that what he is reading in this case is not "speech" but thoughts or pre-speech.[5]

As will be shown in the discussion which follows, all these methods are utilized by Fuentes, in varying degrees and in different combinations.

"Chac Mool"

The transcription of the content of a diary as a means of conveying a sustained account of fictive past events is to be found only in "Chac Mool",[6] the first story of Los días enmascarados. The use of the diary makes it possible to distinguish two different times in addition to that of the narrator, whose time of narration we have already identified as the true fictive present. By taking the time of narration into account, the other two periods of time presented may be accepted as sustained narratives of the fictive past. We refer to two periods because, although the narrative does involve one continuous past from some time one and a half years before Filiberto's death until the evening of the day after it, the events are presented as if they constituted two distinct periods of time in the past and are even narrated in two different ways. The more remote past is contained in Filiberto's diary. The more recent past consists of the narrator's reading of the diary and the incidents that happened to him during the period from Filiberto's death until his arrival at Filiberto's house, on the day after his death.

The presentation of the incidents in which the narrator is himself involved does not entail any particularly striking techniques. The narrator remembers and narrates what took place during that period of time when he travelled from Acapulco with Filiberto's body and when he subsequently arrived at Filiberto's house only to be confronted by what appears to be the reincarnation of the god Chac Mool. The brief exposition at the beginning of the story, the conclusion to the narrative, and those few comments offered by the narrator (pp. 18 and 21) to fill in gaps in the diary are the extent of the first level of the fictive past. The actual period of time that elapses is approximately twenty-four hours. It clearly begins on the night before Filiberto's body is placed on a bus bound for Mexico City (". . . esa noche organizó un baile . . .", p. 7) and ends the night of the following day ("Cuando a las nueve de la noche llegamos a la terminal, aún no podía concebir la locura de mi amigo", p. 27).

There is little detailed plot development in the recent past. The narrator passes his time, once he has spent the first night in Acapulco and boarded the bus with the coffin, reading Filiberto's diary. The only surprise left for the reader is the discovery that Chac Mool was not a figment of Filiberto's imagination, but a reality that the narrator eventually has to face also.

In relation to the fictive present, the impression that the recent past of the narrator has been recuperated and interpolated into the fictive present is somewhat diminished, precisely because the time of narration is virtually ignored. By his very nature, however, and from the context of his own present, the narrator serves as an intermediary through whom the reader of the story gains access to the narrator's past experiences. The past is thus made to appear more distant. Moreover, the flow of time in the recent past is not controlled or distorted by the narrator's own subjectivity since, through his reading of the diary and the narration of his own experience, he reconstructs an objective chronology.

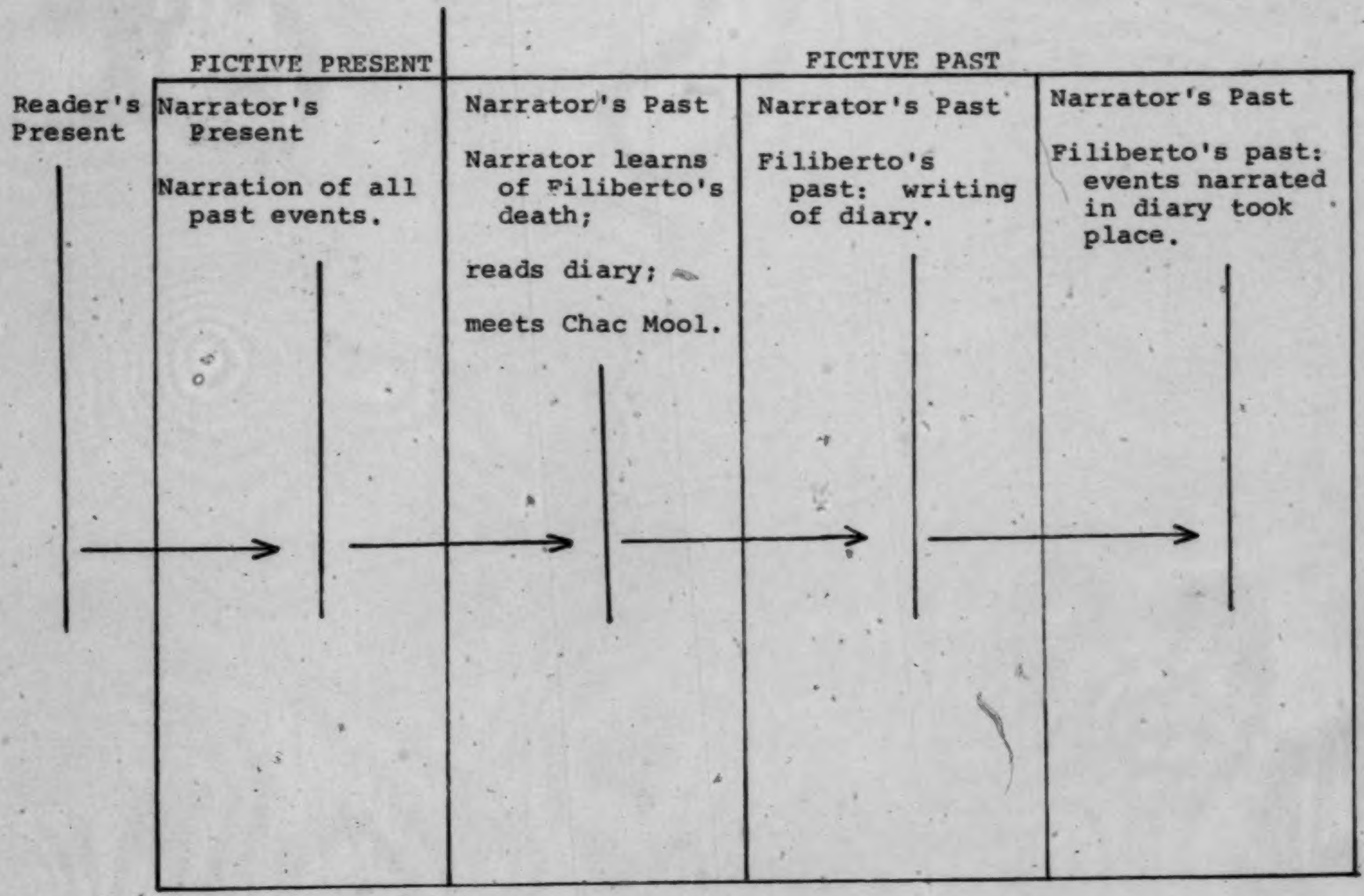
A more interesting technique is used to present the events which constitute the remote past and lead to Filiberto's death. Filiberto himself gives his own impressions of what took place in his jottings in a notebook, in the form of a diary, which his friend reads while travelling with Filiberto's body from Acapulco to Mexico City. At the same time as he is reading the diary, the narrator also comments on the story told by Filiberto in the diary. This procedure provides precisely the contrast necessary for the reader of "Chac Mool" to place Filiberto's story in doubt and to question the verisimilitude of what he has written. It is this "other" perspective, provided by the narrator's comments, that makes the reader ask himself whether or not Filiberto is insane or going insane, and whether or not his story is true. The discrepancy is maintained until the very end when, not only do the two time lines of the past become one, but the two stories, that of the narrator and that of Filiberto, are united: Chac Mool presents himself in person to the narrator. If Filiberto's story was the result of an overactive imagination or insanity, so is the narrator's.

Through the use of the diary technique, the remote past is inserted into the narrator's recent past. At the same time, both fictive past times are interpolated into the fictive present, which is the moment of narration. But this sustained interpolation of the two past times does not have the effect of taking the reader back to the past but rather of bringing the past to the present. The past is made to usurp the present to the extent that the latter almost completely disappears.

The fact is that the majority of the narrative of "Chac Mool" takes the form of the recording of past events. Moreover, the past is presented rather objectively. There is no attempt to show the subjective workings of the mind through memory, for example. In the diary and in the narrative of the recent past are thoughts and events recorded in writing, being read in another time by another character. As readers we are quite removed from the time when the events took place, not so much because of the difference in time, but because the events have undergone several narrative transmissions, so to speak. Moreover, the reader is not really allowed to abandon the fictive present, because the narrator's interruptions continue to remind him of the other times involved.

In the light of these observations, it might be concluded that, regardless of first impressions, the story is as much about the confirmation of Chac Mool's existence, as a result of his appearance to the narrator, as it is about the circumstances of Filiberto's death. Such an effect could not have been obtained without the provision of two perspectives. Since Filiberto is dead, his story can only be told directly by having recourse to what he had previously written in his diary. Had the narrator suppressed the diary, however, and simply told the entire story himself, he would have reduced the effects to be obtained from a comparison of his own experiences with those of Filiberto. Hence, the presence of three time lines in "Chac Mool" contributes appreciably to the effects produced by the story and is an essential part of its structure.

The technique of using the diary in this manner presupposes several important factors in the time structure of a narrative and its reception by a reader. It not only presupposes that events have been interpreted but that, since the writer of the diary usually records what has already taken place, we, as readers, are at least twice removed from the time when the events occurred. In "Chac Mool", we are still further removed from the time of the events as a result of the introduction of two more time levels. Since he reads the diary written by Filiberto, the narrator of this story is, in fact, the second narrator. Moreover, the entire episode took place some time ago ("Hace poco tiempo, Filiberto murió ahogado en Acapulco", p. 7). There are, therefore, several time levels involved (see schema on following page). Each level, between the reader's present and the events that took place in Filiberto's past, involves the conscious narration, reading or writing of events that took place. In no case does Fuentes attempt to present the direct conscious or unconscious thought process of a character. Moreover, the technique of using the diary to present the past has a rather obvious effect on the structure of the narrative mainly because it can clearly be seen as separate from the rest of the narrative. The majority of the passages of the journal are preceded by a date and moreover are clearly separated from the interpolated comments of the narrator and from each other. They are "blocks" of the past recording only those moments and events which Filiberto himself had considered important. Throughout the story, time is therefore presented objectively and, although there are several time levels and the diary technique makes for an interesting interplay, the objective time structure of the narrative is not adversely affected by the interpolation of the past.


FICTIVE PRESENT
FICTIVE PAST
Reader's Present
Narrator's Present
Narration of all past events.
Narrator's Past
Narrator learns of Filiberto's death;
reads diary;
meets Chac Mool.
Narrator's Past
Filiberto's past: writing of diary.
Narrator's Past
Filiberto's past: events narrated in diary took place.

Las buenas conciencias

The presentation of the past in Las buenas conciencias may be considered as more subjective than in "Chac Mool" in one sense only: at the beginning and at the end of the novel it is emphasized that the recuperation of the past occurs through the memory of the principal character, Jaime Ceballos. As indicated in our previous chapter, the content of the novel is a flashback, presented through the mediation of Jaime, so that the fictive present consists solely of the time he takes to remember. Although it is clearly unlikely that Jaime could "remember" the events of one hundred years in detail, the reader is nevertheless persuaded to accept it as a possibility, if only as simply a narrative device. In addition to those aspects of the device to which we have already referred, the reader is further persuaded by the content of Chapter I of the novel to accept the narrative as a product of Jaime's memory. While furnishing a detailed description of his ancestral home, this chapter demonstrates how the past, which will be the subject of the rest of the novel, pervades the walls and rooms of the house. In effect, it appears that Jaime does not need to "remember"; the house in which he has been reared is so permeated by the past that it has become a part of his present. The century-old dust, which is occasionally raised by the wind, quickly settles back into the corners when the wind dies down (p. 11); the bathroom fixtures are still those of two generations ago (pp. 12-13), and the cellar is full of old furniture, cobwebs, and bric-à brac:

> A la entrada de la casa, a la izquierda, está el bodegón repleto de telarañas, baúles, cuadros desechados, muebles cojos, leña, colecciones de mariposas cuyas alas se mezclan con el vidrio pulverizado que las cubría, espejos teñidos, paja, tomos desencuadernados de los folletines leídos por las generaciones pasadas: Paul Féral, Dumas, Ponson du Terrail; máquinas de costura olvidadas. (p. 13)

Moreover, there are several indications in Chapter I that even the past prior to Jaime's own lifetime has become part of his memory and that he is therefore able to "remember" it:

> De igual manera que la luz aísla ciertos objetos de la casa, ciertos objetos del bodegón se aíslan en la memoria de Jaime. Recuerda el ejemplar amarillo de El Siglo XIX, hallado en el fondo de un baúl, en el que la patria mexicana agradecía a Prim haberse retirado de la aventura imperial de Napoleon III. Recuerda los sables plateados del tío Francisco cruzados sobre la pared del salón de recepciones. ¡Cuántas veces había jugado Jaime con ellos, simulando combates corsarios, justas caballerescas, fugas mosqueteras! Recuerda la enorme

> fotografía ovalada y sepia de los
> abuelos. Y un día encontró, en el
> baúl, los velos negros que su
> abuela debió usar en el entierro de
> Pepe Ceballos. (p. 13)

After this chapter, however, there are few direct indications that the events narrated are remembered by Jaime. Yet, the author does take some pains to justify the attribution of the events narrated in the novel to Jaime's memory by explaining how Jaime learned of those events which he could not possibly have witnessed personally. For example, when the Mexican Revolution is referred to in Chapter II, it is shown how Jaime learned of it:

> -¿Y la Revolución? --preguntaba
> Jaime cuando, hacia los nueve años,
> se enteró de aquel movimiento.
> -Al principio no asustó a mamá --le
> respondía su padre, Rodolfo, mientras
> consultaba con la mirada a Asunción.
> (p. 26)

Finally, the reader is inclined to accept that the entire plot is the product of memory because of the predominance of Jaime's personal recollections. Chapters IV to X depict Jaime's life from seven to seventeen years of age, with some moments described in detail and other periods passed over with a brief comment, just as they might have been recollected through the selective process of memory:

> Cada año de la vida, como el reposo de cada noche, tiene simas de sueño profundo y otras, cimas, de vigilia intermedia. Se pierden, en el recuerdo, horas, días enteros; trozos totales de existencia. La vida en la pequeña capital de provincia, una vez descubierta, tiende a agotar el asombro. Sólo quedan jornadas, páginas aisladas que se empeñan, como un plomo, en hundirse y echar raíz. Catorce años: el regalo de la Biblia. Quince años: las voces de los que tienen una opinión sobre uno, de los que dicen cosas sobre uno, de los que se sienten responsables del futuro de uno, de los que indican el buen camino. (p. 79)

Nevertheless, in spite of these endeavours on the part of the author to give the presentation of the past more subjective connotations, the past is, in fact, narrated considerably more objectively than in "Chac Mool" or in any of the other novels to be discussed precisely because it is clear that the use of the memory technique in Las buenas conciencias is no more than a narrative trick. In almost every other respect, the past is presented objectively in a narrative related by a third person narrator. The narration of the past, which, with the exception of the last and the first two pages, consists of the entire novel, is governed by a rigorous, historical chronology. The narration of the past is not interrupted by any return to the fictive present or by the intervention of any other narrative voice.

Indeed, more than in any of Fuentes' early novels, except Aura, time is generally made to unfold in a continuous uninterrupted line.

Since Chapter I is a somewhat static description of the sumptuous ancestral home and its memories, the story "remembered" by Jaime begins in Chapter II, with an account of the Ceballos' family history from the middle of the last century, and traces the social and enonomic development of Jaime's ancestral past. His ancestral history is synchronized with that of Guanajuato, which, in turn, reflects the more general history of Mexico. Although a strict chronological time is observed in the development of the narrative, the actual period of time in question is passed over fairly rapidly, as is to be expected, since in the space of twenty-two pages a family history spanning approximately eighty years is narrated. Yet, in spite of the rapidity with which events are covered in this chapter, an objective historical time line is clearly evident. Dates are referred to and the necessary links between events are established in order to maintain a clear chronology. It is known how and when the Ceballos family established itself in Guanajuato:

> Este, otrora distinguido gobernador

> de la entidad, fue el que permitió a la pobre familia de inmigrantes madrileños instalar su tienda de paños cerca del templo de San Diego, allá por el año de 1852. (p. 15)

Thereafter, the story of the family is synchronized with the history of Mexico through reference to dates and to events of national importance:

> Y en 1862, cuando las fuerzas de Prim desembocaron a cobrar la deuda mexicana, la furia antiespañola, encarnada en grupos de jóvenes que recorrían las estrechas calles de la vieja población gritando "¡Hasta Madrid!", obligó a don Higinio Ceballos a cerrar el comercio y esconderse con toda su familia. (pp. 16-17)
>
> En 1903, cuando el Presidente Díaz pasó bajo los capiteles de bronce y las estatuas de las musas para inaugurar el teatro Juárez, la familia Ceballos ocupó uno de los principales palcos. (p. 21)
>
> Por lo visto, los patriarcas de la familia Ceballos acostumbraban morir en fechas históricas: aquél era un día de la tercera semana de noviembre, y poco después se supo en toda la región que el mismo día había sido asesinado, en Puebla, Aquiles Serdán. (p. 24)

In the same way as other references to events of Mexican history, the allusion to the beginning of the Mexican Revolution and the assassination of Aquiles Serdán (20 November, 1910) has the effect of emphasizing the importance of objective time. The chronological account of the Ceballos family is placed in the same context as objective history and, thereby, obtains the same connotations of objectivity.

A similar attention to objectivity is maintained in the chronological development of the narrative in the third chapter of the novel, which is primarily concerned with describing the generation that preceded Jaime Ceballos. In this chapter, the lives of Jaime's father, Rodolfo Ceballos, and the aunt and uncle who adopt him, Asunción and Jorge Balcárcel, are described in some detail, with particular emphasis on placing them within the historical and chronological framework established in the previous chapter. The references to the history of Mexico are continued:

> ¿No debían los Ceballos su fortuna y posición a la buena voluntad de los gobernadores Muñoz Ledo y Antillón? ¿No habían incrementado una y afirmado otra, merced a la del general Díaz? ¿Por qué, ahora, habían de enajenarse la del general Calles? O la del general Cárdenas, cuando demostró que no sería un pelele. O, por fin, la del general Ávila Camacho, durante cuya presidencia Jorge Balcárcel se permitió el lujo de sincronizar sus creencias privadas con sus declaraciones públicas. (p. 38)

Several dates are mentioned (pp. 37, 38, 39) and objective measurements of time are employed both to maintain the chronological continuity between the events of the narrative ("apenas diez años antes", p. 39; "al año de casados", p. 42) and to indicate the importance that the objective, routine measurement of time will acquire in the story as a whole ("Desayuno a las ocho, comida a la una y media, cena a las nueve", p. 36). Thus, in spite of the fact that there is some chronological dislocation in the order in which events are narrated in this chapter (it begins with the time in which Balcárcel and Asunción are already installed in the ancestral home and subsequently returns to the period before their return to Mexico, pp. 42-43), the general impression of chronological development is maintained.

Chapters IV to X form the major section of the narrative and deal exclusively with Jaime's personal past. As in the previous chapters, objective time is evident in two major ways: in the chronological development of the narrative, and in an emphasis on the objective measurement of time. It is particularly noteworthy that Jaime's story is presented precisely in order to demonstrate the passage of time and to indicate the stages in the life of a growing boy. There are constant references to his age. There is no doubt in the reader's mind that, in Chapter IV, Jaime goes from seven to thirteen years of age; that Chapter V traces his fourteenth and fifteenth years; that Chapters VI and VII deal with Jaime's sixteenth year and the crisis of his adolescence; and that Chapters VIII, IX and X deal with Jaime at 17 years of age. Some chapters even appear to be structured according to that same yearly cycle: Chapter V, for example, begins with a reference to the significance of the passage of the years in a lifetime, Jaime's fourteenth and fifteenth years in particular, and ends with a reference to the end of a year: "Así puede pasar un año" (p. 95). The same theme reappears at the beginning of the following chapter: "¿Qué era un año?" (p. 96). In addition, the impression of an objective chronology is further reinforced through the constant references to "real" events, such as those of the Christian calendar, and to the objective measurement of time by the clock: "Los cohetes del Sábado de Gloria" (p. 55); "Ese día es Domingo de Pascua" (p. 62); "Los habitantes de la casa escuchan la noche de abril" (p. 96); ". . . a las diez en punto" (p. 155); "Asunción lo despertó a las cuatro de la mañana" (p. 166).

As has been demonstrated, temporal objectivity in the presentation of the past in Las buenas conciencias is a direct result of the chronological continuity of the narrative and the emphasis placed on the objective measurement of time. However, there is another aspect of narrative technique which may be of still greater importance in the objective presentation of past time. This is the presence of an omniscient and omnipresent third person narrator who is entrusted with relating the entire story. Essentially, this means that the perspective from which events are narrated is not limited to Jaime's memory, nor does his memory interfere in the narration of events.

The narrator of Las buenas conciencias is not restricted, but is omniscient. He has a panoramic view of events and characters and is just as capable of viewing them objectively from the outside or of contemplating them from the perspective of a particular character. He is equally at home narrating Jaime's thoughts and feelings as he is narrating Juan Manuel's (p. 189), Balcarcel's (p. 74), or Asunción's (p. 108). The narrator appears sometimes to see things from the point of view of a child, that is, Jaime, and sometimes from that of an adult. In the greater part of the text the narrator appears to distance himself from the events he is narrating, but on a few occasions, he moves closer, both in time and space, to the events: "Y, sin embargo, hoy regresaba con su padre de la procesión de Viernes Santo . . ." (p. 54). Similarly, although the majority of the narrative is in the past tense, there are a few occasions in which there is a sudden change to the present tense (p. 56, p. 113). In terms of time, the narrator is free; he refers to the past, present and future. In the description of the family history in Chapter II, for example, the narrative suddenly shifts ahead to a conversation among Rodolfo, Asunción and Jaime, in which past events are described:

> --Y la Revolución? --preguntaba Jaime cuando, hacia los nueve años, se enteró de aquel movimiento.
> --Al principio no asustó a mamá --le respondía su padre, Rodolfo, mientras consultaba con la mirada a Asunción. (p. 26)

On another occasion, in Chapter IV, there is a more obvious example of the narrator's freedom of movement in time, evident in his precognition of the outcome of events: "Sabría más tarde que allí, frente a ese Dios victimado, sintió por primera vez que era otro y nuevo" (p. 53).[7]

Although there is a predominantly objective view of events and characters in the novel, there are, nevertheless, a few instances within the fictive past in which events are not described as if seen by an outside observer or by an observer who places himself in the perspective of a character, but through the thought processes of the characters themselves. These are instances of subjective time in the past. Instead of the narrator describing the character's thoughts, the actual flow of thought is presented as if the characters' minds were open to view. There are two major examples: the presentation of the thoughts of Jaime and Ezequiel when the latter is discovered by Jaime in the stables (pp. 67-68, 70-71), and the interrelated thoughts of Balcárcel and Asunción on one occasion when they manage to overcome the barrier between them and embrace (pp. 142-144). These passages are distinguished from the rest of the text by parentheses and quotation marks and, in each case, the consciousness of the character appears to be speaking. The reason for this usage is more obvious in the case of the episode concerning Jorge Balcárcel: after so many years of silence, they are both more able to say to themselves what they could not say to each other. Moreover, the two interlaced currents of thought clearly demonstrate the irreparable breach between them. In the case of Jaime, the episode with Ezequiel takes place at a point when he is beginning to feel the solitude of adolescence, and to see himself differently. For this reason, his thoughts are shown directly. The direct presentation of Ezequiel's thoughts is probably related to his peculiar situation as a fugitive, distrustful of everyone, particularly at the beginning of his acquaintance with Jaime. In any event, what he does say could not really be shared with

Jaime. Notwithstanding their subjective connotations, the fact that these passages are included within a fictive past related by a third person omniscient narrator gives them a less subjective quality and makes them appear less direct. Such a conclusion is further enhanced by the fact that the passages in question are cited in parentheses and between quotation marks. As a result, the narrator still appears to place himself between the reader and the character, as if what is presented were not true interior monologues, but thought sequences re-constructed or quoted by the narrator. Hence, even the most subjective elements of the narrative are strongly tinged with objectivity.

These observations concerning the time structure of _Las buenas conciencias_ lead us to several conclusions about the novel. The predominance of a third person omniscient narrator undoubtedly has the result of maintaining a considerable sense of objectivity in the presentation of the story. Yet, in an attempt to show how the present is a product of the past, the narrative deals with a fictive past, rather than with a fictive present. Fuentes did not, therefore, choose to convey history in an entirely objective manner. Objective, historical facts are not revealed directly, but are conveyed through the narrative of the personal history of the protagonist's family. Moreover, the objectivity of this history is attenuated by portraying it as if it were, yet without its actually being, a product of the retrospection of the protagonist himself. This procedure not only has the effect of giving a sense of order, unity, and a common perspective to the extended period of time covered by the narrative, but allows the author to give a colouring of subjectivity to an otherwise entirely objective view.

La muerte de Artemio Cruz

The third person narrative sections of La muerte de Artemio Cruz and some parts of the second person sections, which together constitute the fictive past of the novel, call to mind some of the techniques which we have already described as essential to the presentation of the fictive past in Las buenas conciencias. Although the two novels are, in effect, quite different from each other, the author has employed the same basic technique of colouring a strictly objective view of the past with an element of subjectivity. To some extent, the difference between the two novels in the use of this technique is a matter of degree. Whereas, in Las buenas conciencias, Jaime Ceballos is made to "remember" virtually the entire novel, in La muerte de Artemio Cruz the "recollections" of Artemio Cruz, although substantial, are fragmented and are contained principally in the sections of the novel narrated in the third person. As in the case of Jaime Ceballos, however, it is clearly indicated, beyond any doubt, that these sections of past narrative are to be attributed to the memory of Artemio Cruz. In the same manner, his memories are not directly presented as such. That is to say that Artemio is not given the role of narrating his own recollections, but that a third person narrator, with a panoramic view of the past, is responsible for communicating them to the reader. Thus, instead of being able to speak in terms of memory time, mind time or interior time, the narrative sections dealing with the past must initially be seen as presenting an objective view of time.

As we have already indicated, and as in Las buenas conciencias, several devices are employed to persuade the reader to accept that the content of the third person narrative segments is recalled by Artemio. Since these sections are narrated in the past tense by an unidentified omniscient narrator, it is only from indications contained in other parts of the novel that it can be understood that they are derived from the memory of a character. In the first and second person narrative segments, the author insists pointedly and repeatedly, that the dying man is remembering and that his memories are recorded in the third person fragments. The reader is made to believe that the memories come from the profounder levels of the dying man's unconscious. Unlike Jaime Ceballos, who consciously seeks to remember, Artemio Cruz's memories rise to the surface only when he loses consciousness, sometimes with the help of the doctor's needle. This is often indicated in the first person section immediately before the second and third person sections of a particular triad as if to establish that both these sections are, in fact, composed of Artemio's unconscious thoughts:

> Me han clavado un puñal largo y frío en el estómago; hay alguien, hay otro que me ha clavado un acero en las entrañas: . . . yo dejo que hagan. (p. 12)
>
> Quiero dormir. Allí viene la punzada. Allí viene. Aaah-ay . . . ¿Otra vez la inyección? ¿Eh? ¿Por qué? No no no, otra cosa, rápido, recuerdo otra cosa; eso duele; aaaah-ay; eso duele; eso duele; eso duerme . . . eso. . . . (pp. 59 and 60)

The second person narrative sections contain still more indications that Artemio falls asleep or is put to sleep before his memories begin to surface. As yet another sign that what is to follow is the product of the unconscious mind, these indications occur most often precisely before the beginning of each third person section:

> . . . cierra los ojos Artemio Cruz. (p. 36)

> . . . habrás gritado cuando te atraviesen la piel con esa aguja llena de un líquido calmante. (p. 61)

> . . . cerrarás los ojos: bostezarás: tú Artemio Cruz, él: creerás en tus días con los ojos cerrados: . . . (p. 18)

> . . . reposarás con los ojos cerrados, pero no dejarás de ver, no dejarás de desear: recordarás, porque así harás tuya la cosa deseada: hacia atrás, hacia atrás, en la nostalgia, podrás hacer tuyo cuanto desees: no hacia adelante, hacia atrás:
> la memoria es el deseo satisfecho:
> sobrevive con la memoria, antes que sea demasiado tarde,
> antes que el caos te impida recordar. (p. 63)

Up to a point, then, they are involuntary memories, although not of the type described by Proust in _A la recherche du temps perdu_.[8] Artemio Cruz wants to remember, but only those facts from his past which seem able to offer him some form of redemption. In spite of himself, his subconscious, personified in the second person narrative voice, makes him remember everything, including those past moments he would prefer to forget:

> . . . detrás de tus párpados cerrados, sabrás que la intensidad de una luz que penetrara hasta el fondo de esa placa reducida e imperfecta podría provocarte sentimientos ajenos a tu voluntad, a tu estado. (p. 60)

In addition to these indications, the author takes advantage of other opportunities to establish that the third person fragments are memories, that in fact the three narrative voices of La muerte de Artemio Cruz constitute a single narrator, identifiable with Artemio himself, through which the different aspects of his character and different levels of his conscious or subconscious state are presented. In the first of the second person fragments, the narrator even provides a summary of everything that will be remembered through the third person narrative voice:

> Pero recordarás otras cosas, otros días, tendrás que recordarlos. Son días que lejos, cerca, empujados hacia el olvido, rotulados por el recuerdo --encuentro y rechazo, amor fugaz, libertad, rencor, fracaso, voluntad-- fueron y serán algo más que los nombres que tu puedas darles: días en que tu destino te perseguirá con un olfato de lebrel, te encontrará, te cobrará, te encarnará con palabras y actos, materia compleja, opaca, adiposa tejida para siempre con la otra, la impalpable, la de tu ánimo absorbido por la materia: amor de membrillo fresco, ambición de uñas que crecen, tedio de calvicie progresiva, melancolía del sol y el desierto, abulia de los platos sucios, distracción de los ríos tropicales, miedo de los sables y la pólvora, pérdida de las sábanas oreadas, juventud de los caballos negros, vejez de la playa abandonada, encuentro del sobre y la estampilla extranjera, repugnancia del incienso, enfermedad de la nicotina, dolor de la tierra roja, ternura del patio en la tarde, espíritu de todos los objetos, materia de todas las almas: tajo de tu memoria, que separa las dos mitades. (p. 17)

Artemio Cruz remembers all this and more. Each of the elements listed is elaborated as a major constituent of the content of one of the third person narrative sections. The idea that the third person narrative sections are to be accepted as the memories of Artemio Cruz is therefore of singular importance to the structure of the novel. These memories are also of supreme importance to Artemio Cruz himself, because he has nothing left but the past. The limited development in the fictive present, in contrast with the preponderance of the fictive past, is symbolic of the brief time left to the dying man. It is through the past that he sees the ultimate possibility of bringing together the loose threads of his life and of finding some form of personal redemption.

The third person narrative segments themselves provide a few indications to the reader that they constitute the recollections of the dying man. The majority of the memories are of Artemio's personal and intimate past and, in many instances, recall events which only he could have known. In other words there is a certain impression of intimacy between the narrator of these memories and the character who is both remembered and purported to remember them. However, the principal indicator that the third person narrative segments are to be considered as memories is not to be found in those segments themselves, but is derived from their textual disposition and relationship to each other. The fragments of the third person narrative succeed each other in an anti-chronological order. This is made all the more obvious since each section is preceded by a specific date, with the evident purpose of emphasizing the chronological dislocation of the narrative. Indeed, the only form of chronological order in the succession of the fragments is a general tendency towards the more remote past, culminating, at the end of the novel, in the birth of Artemio. In this way, the subjective connotations of Artemio's memories are to some extent preserved. That is to say that the establishment of the order in which the fragments are presented appears to issue only from the memory. Consequently, the fragments are separate and unconnected except by implication. There is an apparent unity and continuity among them only when they are seen to be linked by memory. On this point, Mario Benedetti makes the following comment:

> Los doce días decisivos se interpolan en desorden cronológico, a la manera de Huxley (como ya ha sido abundantemente destacado por la crítica), pero en la novela de Fuentes el procedimiento está mejor justificado que en Eyeless in Gaza, donde la novedad y la escarmentada pericia de Huxley no alcanzaban a ocultar su arbitrariedad esencial. El procedimiento de Fuentes tiene rigor. En el presente, o sea, el plano regido por el Yo, surge, por lo general, una palabra ajena, o un pensamiento del protagonista, o el

> relámpago de un recuerdo, que exige la apelación a un pasado; pero no a cualquier pasado, sino a uno particular, con fecha exacta, con rostros, con palabras que fueron vitales, decisivas. Imposible barajar esas imágenes; imposible reordenar esos fragmentos de pasado en otra sucesión o dependencia que no sea la que el presente exige.[9]

In spite of all these indications, however, it is clear that, as in the case of Las buenas conciencias, the technique used in presenting the the past is a narrative device employed to persuade the reader to accept the interpolation of the past more readily in the terms of the manner in which it appears in the novel. It is a device in the sense that although the reader can accept the past as representative of Artemio's personal history, he does not have direct access to the memory of Artemio Cruz himself except through the intermediary of a third person who, in fact, is responsible for the narration of Artemio's recollections. In the third person narrative segments, Artemio is converted into an object seen by a third person, but in the first and second person segments he is also converted into an object and seen by himself. Although the narrative may derive from his memory, Artemio is constantly referred to as "he" or "the man" in the third person narrative sections (for example, pp. 18, 36, 128, etc.) as if, in fact, another character were narrating his story. The use of the third person serves the function of giving an external portrait of the character, but also responds to a split in Artemio's character, which is evident throughout the novel. This split, more obvious in the use of three narrative voices, is also apparent in the "mirror images" which occur in all three narrative persons. It appears, for example, on the first page of the first person narrative, in the description of the glass incrustations of Teresa's purse in which the dying man sees himself. Here, the effect of fragmentation of the character is heightened by the fact that the mirror is itself made up of pieces of glass which necessarily return a fragmented image: ". . . era un rostro roto en vidrios sin simetría, con el ojo muy cerca de la oreja y muy lejos de su par, con la mueca distribuida en tres espejos circulantes" (p. 10). In the first segment of the second person narrative, Artemio sees himself as his twin, on the day before his death, reflected in his glass-topped desk:

> Y entonces te llevarás las manos al vientre y tu cabeza de canas crespas, de rostro aceitunado, pegará huecamente sobre el cristal de la mesa y otra vez, ahora tan cerca, verás ese reflejo de tu mellizo enfermo . . . El gemelo reflejado se incorporará al otro, que eres tú. (p. 16)

Similarly, in the first segment of the third person narrative, Artemio sees himself reflected as another when he enters the revolving glass doors of his office building:

> Se ajustó la corbata frente al vidrio del vestíbulo y atrás en el segundo vidrio, el que daba a la calle de Madero, un hombre idéntico a él, pero tan lejano, se arreglaba el nudo de la corbata también, con los mismos dedos manchados de nicotina, el mismo traje cruzado, pero sin color, . . . y dejaba caer la mano al mismo tiempo que él y luego le daba la espalda y caminaba hacia el centro de la calle, mientras él buscaba el ascensor. (p. 22)

He sees himself just as another person close to him would see him. It is also significant that these passages occur, respectively, in the first segments of the three narrative voices, thereby establishing from the outset the idea that Artemio Cruz has become the object of his own vision. By the same token, the narrative distance afforded by the use of a third person narrator for the greater part of the account of Artemio's life is a further means whereby the same effect can be obtained, as if it were possible for one side of Artemio's character to contemplate and describe the actions of the other.

Since they are narrated in the third person by an unidentified omniscient narrator, without any absolute indication that they might be issuing from the mind or memory of a character, it must be assumed that the third person narrative sections convey an objective sense of time. Even if we attribute these sections to the memory of Artemio Cruz, the technique employed has nothing in common with a sense of interior time associated with a stream of consciousness narrative. In effect, there are few instances of the free flow of thought in the fictive past, and these are associated with characters other than Artemio in addition to with Artemio himself. Moreover, the scope of the narrative is not limited by Artemio's memory nor, in fact, does his memory really interfere in the relation of events. It is obvious that the narrator knows much more than Artemio could possibly know. For example, the final third person segment narrates Artemio's own birth. Similarly, there are numerous examples of the reported speech, thoughts and actions of other characters that Artemio could not possibly have witnessed. In the very first third person segment (pp. 18-28), there are two alternating narrative sequences which describe, on the one hand, Artemio Cruz on his way to his office and what follows after his arrival, and on the other, Catalina and Teresa shopping for Teresa's wedding gown. Although it is obvious that Artemio could have no exact knowledge of their conversation, their thoughts or actions, the narrative makes them all part of his memory in much the same way as Jaime Ceballos is able to remember his ancestral past in Las buenas conciencias. In some cases, there is an implied explanation for the apparent scope of Artemio's memory. Thus Artemio might well have been able to provide details of Lorenzo's adventures and death in Spain (pp. 228-241) because he received letters from his son, and one letter in particular just before Lorenzo died: "Yo te escribo, con el papel apoyado contra las rodillas, mientras las oigo hablar y trato de decirles cuánto amo a España" (p. 237); "Tocó con un dedo la carta que llevaba en el parche de la camisa" (p. 240). In the majority of cases, however, there is no attempt to explain how the passages of narrative which we are persuaded to attribute to Artemio's memory could be conveyed by such an omniscient narrator and how it might be possible for Artemio to know all the thoughts, words and actions of Gamaliel Bernal, Catalina, Teresa, Lunero, Lilia, Laura, his parents and grandparents.

The omniscience of the third person narrator is further enhanced by the inclusion of a number of interior monologues, principally in the fourth (pp. 93-116) and eleventh (pp. 280-306) segments of the third person narrative. These passages, conveying the thoughts of Catalina (pp. 93-112), Artemio Cruz (p. 114) and the interlaced thoughts of Ludivinia and Pedrito Menchaca (pp. 296-301), are direct interior monologues, or interior dialogues in the case of the interlacing of thoughts between Artemio Cruz and Catalina and between Ludivinia and Pedrito. These passages are to be seen as emphasizing rather than detracting from the omniscience of the narrator because, although they are narrated in the first person, they nonetheless remain within the general framework of the third person narrative. By the same token, the impression of subjective time is lessened because the passages are enclosed in a narrative in which an objective sense of time dominates. As in *Las buenas conciencias*, these monologues are distinguished from the rest of the text. In this case they are set apart by quotation marks (pp. 93-114) or by parentheses and a dash indicative of direct speech (pp. 296-301). As in *Las buenas conciencias* also, they are employed to draw attention to the walls of silence that separate many of Fuentes' characters from those to whom they are closest.

The presentation of the past as memory is further belied by the objective quality with which time is recorded in the third person segments of the novel. The third person narrative spans a period of seventy-one years, the exact age of Artemio Cruz. It therefore completes the history of the dying man, making the novel not so much the "death", but the life of Artemio Cruz. The twelve fragments of the third person narrative represent twelve decisive moments in Artemio's life. Unlike the first and second person fragments, those narrated in the third person trace a recognizably objective chronology in accordance with clock-time. Each fragment is headed by a date in parentheses: "(1941: Julio 6)" (p. 18);"(1919: Mayo 20)" (p. 36); and the final one, "(1889: Abril 9)" (p. 314), which not only make it possible for the reader to reconstruct the chronology of Artemio's life, but also place the story within the objective framework of "real" time.

These dates also connect the personal history of Artemio Cruz with certain events of national and international history, and have the effect of further enhancing the sense of objectivity with which these fragments are narrated. Through this fusion of the historical and the personal, Artemio Cruz is seen as both a hero and an anti-hero of the Mexican Revolution. His life is made to correspond with the trajectory of the Revolution so that decisive moments of his existence are also decisive stages in the history of the Revolution: the pre-revolutionary period, the military and political conflict, the agrarian reform, and the industrialization of the country. Artemio's life is therefore intimately associated with these historical moments, seventy years in the recent history of Mexico. In other parts of the text there are also certain resonances that associate Artemio Cruz with pre-Columbian times.

In his excellent study[11] of the third person narrative segments and their relationship to the structure of the novel as a whole, Nelson Osorio points out that the very order of these sections responds to certain fundamentally objective criteria related to the life of Artemio Cruz himself. After plotting the twelve episodes of Artemio's past on a graph, Osorio shows how his life consists of "high", "intermediate" and "low" points in terms of his social success, which are inversely "low" "intermediate" and "high" points in his moral and spiritual disintegration. In a detailed analysis, Osorio demonstrates how these objectively dated periods of Artemio's life are related in a much more profound sense, and how their placement in the novel is a reflection of that relationship:

> Pero los momentos más altos socialmente de Artemio Cruz son, al mismo tiempo, los más bajos en la escala moral . . .
> Los episodios opuestos en la escala

> social son, en cambio, aquéllos en que se encuentra más cerca de su autenticidad, momentos en que su vida misma está en juego y es canjeada simbólicamente por otras vidas, las que irán rondándole en su lecho de muerte como fantasmas . . .
>
> La disposición de los episodios, de acuerdo a nuestro análisis, nos permite establecer entre ellos una serie de conexiones significativas que enriquecen en profundidad el sentido de la obra y muestra la existencia de un sistema consciente que rige su distribución. Se pone así de manifiesto que esta disposición no es arbitraria ni desordenada, como a primera vista podría pensarse, sino que, según puede desprenderse del cuadro y de su análisis, es orgánica, funcional y significativa.[12]

Perhaps the greatest evidence of temporal objectivity in the third person narrative is to be found in the structure of individual segments of narrative. That is to say that the segments are constructed with a view to maintaining a basic chronological continuity in the narration of events and with a certain degree of attention to the provision of specific times and dates. In fact, ten of the twelve third person segments adhere strictly to chronological continuity and the objective measurement of time. Only the second and fourth segments (pp. 36-55 and 93-116) contain any significant chronological dislocation.

The eleventh segment is one of the most typical of the chronologically sequenced sections. It deals with Artemio at thirteen years of age, his relationship with his uncle Lunero and with his paternal uncle and grandmother. The section begins with an indication that it is early morning ("los gallos . . . anunciaron la veloz mañana del trópico" p. 280), and continues by relating the daily activities of Lunero and Artemio, who are making candles by the river in order to support the last remnants of the Menchaca family. The chronological description of the action in which Lunero and Artemio are engaged at that moment is briefly interrupted only by the reminiscences of Lunero and Ludivinia of a more remote past ("Antes --recordó Lunero, . . ." pp. 280-281; "Hace trece años, cuando le entregaron al niño, pensó en mandarlo por el río . . ." pp. 284-285; "Atanasio se lo dijo, recordó la anciana Ludivinia" pp. 291-294). However, these reminiscences hardly amount to an interruption, or dislocation, since they are appropriately incorporated into the narration of the continuing action. They are narrated in the third person and are not dwelt on at length or in great detail. The recording of the passage of time continues as events succeed each other in chronological sequence: "Apenas pasó el mediodía" (p. 287); "esta tarde caliente" (p. 293); "--Lunero --dijo el niño cuando despertó de la siesta" (p. 298); "Serían las cinco y media" (p. 301); "Serían las siete de la noche" (p. 304); "la vieja desconoció la noche" (p. 306).

Although this particular segment of the narrative contains no significant shifts in time, there are a number of shifts in space which create some breaks in the narrative. These occur when Ludivinia and Pedrito are introduced in the narrative, creating a certain counterpoint through the simultaneity of their monologues with the action involving Lunero and Artemio ("Sí, en la misma tarde aplanada por el calor, la vieja Ludivinia, ... tararea con los ojos bien abiertos esa maldita canción", p. 289; also pp. 289 and 303). The two simultaneous currents of action and the two sets of people are merged when Pedrito is accidentally shot by Artemio, and the old Ludivinia is whipped and knocked over by the man who had come to take Lunero to another plantation. The narrative is further disrupted, as indicated earlier, by the interpolation of two interlaced interior monologues. The effect of disruption of the chronology, however, is minimal since what are presented as interior monologues could equally well have been a dialogue between Ludivinia and her son, Pedrito. This segment is typical of the majority of the third person narratives because it follows a generally chronological pattern of development; there are some references to a more remote past, introduced as indirect memories of the characters; space shifts are present if not prominent; and there is a general tendency in the narrative to trace an action lasting for a twelve or twenty-four hour cycle.

Of the two non-chronological segments referred to above, the second, in which Artemio's first two visits to the home of Gamaliel Bernal are described (pp. 36-55), presents a more radical disruption. This is because the other segment, depicting the relationship between Catalina and Artemio after five years of marriage, does not in fact present an anti-chronological sequence but rather attempts to provide a broad spectrum of events whose sequence with relation to each other appears to be ignored, more than it is re-ordered. However, both segments emphasize the narrator's freedom of movement in time and space.

The second segment, dated "1919: Mayo 19" begins at the point in which Artemio Cruz has arrived at the Bernal estate and has told the story of Gonzalo's final hours in the Perales prison. On the following page (37), a time shift occurs when the reader is informed of Artemio's conduct in Puebla before visiting the Bernal home. However, the interruption is very brief (two sentences) and has no significant effect on the chronology. The chronological continuity of the narrative is reestablished and, from references on the following two pages ("Sonaron a un tiempo todos los relojes de la casa y el viejo se incorporó a encender la lámpara de acetileno" p. 38; "La noche había caído" p. 39), it is learned that it is night. The narrative continues for four more pages, without any further indication of a change in time, until page 43 when it returns to the earlier moment of Artemio's arrival in Puebla. On this occasion, beginning with the comment "Pasó seis días en Puebla antes de presentarse a la casa de don Gamaliel Bernal" (p. 43) Artemio's actions before visiting the Bernal home are described in more detail and occupy the next five pages. The narrative of the next one and a half pages then shifts to a conversation between Catalina and Gamaliel which appears to follow Artemio's first visit and there are indications that it is the afternoon. Beginning with the last three paragraphs of page 49, the narrative changes to a description of the action at the Bernal home at the moment of Artemio's arrival. On page 51, it shifts ahead to the time after Artemio's departure, at which point a passage describing Catalina's thoughts and memories is inserted. The narrative then switches abruptly, on page 54, to Artemio's conversation with Gamaliel Bernal on the occasion of his second visit, which takes place on the morning following his first visit to the house. It appears, after the first two paragraphs, that a brief backward step in time is taken to describe Artemio's earlier meeting with Catalina, ending on the following page with a return to the point where Gamaliel and Artemio met for the second time.

These constant shifts in time and space result in an unusually complicated segment. Not only is the chronology deliberately dislocated, but the scarcity of precise references to time makes it necessary for the reader to re-read the section, possibly several times, in order to reconstruct the chronological sequence and understand the plot. One rather disconcerting example of temporal confusion occurs on page 39 in the following statement: "Era inquietante --se inquietó al pensarlo otra vez--". It is difficult to determine to what time "otra vez" could refer. It could well be the fictive present of the novel in which the dying Artemio is remembering his life or could, perhaps, refer to another time during which he was thinking about these events again, but it is difficult to verify when it could have been. This point, as well as the reason for this particular temporal and spacial arrangement of this chapter, are unclear. From our point of view, they appear to be unnecessary.

In spite of the lack of linear chronology in the events of this particular segment, however, the general impression left with the reader is that the fictive past described by the third person narrator is generally quite distinct from the fictive present narrated in the first and second persons. Past time is more objectively portrayed in that it reveals very few instances of interior time. Where there are attempts to give time a subjective value, the impact is lessened because of the intrusive presence of the third person narrator, who is responsible for narrating the entire series of events relating to the past. It is this narrator, together with the emphasis on the chronological sequencing of events, which reduce the impression of the presentation of the past as memory. It is particularly significant, however, that the narrative depicting the past accounts for approximately two-thirds of the novel, a fact which is, alone, an indication of the importance attached to the past in the novel at both the personal and the historical levels.

La región más transparente

Compared to the three and a half years spanned by the fictive present, the fictive past in *La región más transparente* consists of a period of approximately forty-four years. While the difference between these two times is considerably less than that evident between the comparable periods of time portrayed in *Las buenas conciencias* and *La muerte de Artemio Cruz*, the three novels do share some basic characteristics with respect to the fictive past. As in the two novels already discussed, past time occupies a considerable portion of *La región más transparente*, and consists of the memories of the principal characters. Moreover, in a major portion of the past narrative, a third person narrator is employed. However, unlike *Las buenas conciencias* and *La muerte de Artemio Cruz*, in which, generally speaking, a single narrative technique is used to deal with past time, a greater variety of techniques for the presentation of the past is employed in *La región más transparente*, ranging from the least to the most subjective. The sections of the novel dealing with the past are interwoven with the fictive present throughout the novel, but not in the methodical and consistent manner of *La muerte de Artemio Cruz*. Although it is perhaps not possible to determine a regular pattern with respect to narrative form or the frequency of introduction of passages pertaining to the fictive past, it should be made clear that, as in *La muerte de Artemio Cruz*, there is some endeavour to distinguish the fictive past from the fictive present. This is evident above all, in *La región más transparente*, in the textual disposition of the novel, the use of titles, and in the various changes in the narrative voice. Of the eleven sections devoted to the past, five are in Part I and six are in Part II, with none in Part III. In effect, as a result of the relative brevity of Part I in relation to Part II, it has a preponderance of past time (generally speaking, pp. 78-157). The apparent irregularity of the introduction of the past into the narrative constitutes another difference between *La región más transparente* and the other two novels. This must be combined with the fact that the past is not associated with the memory of a single character but with that of several. Perhaps for this reason, also, the methods of introducing the past and the forms used to narrate it are not uniform. Finally, the presence of a mysterious "witness" to all evocations of the past, in the character of Ixca Cienfuegos, also distinguishes this novel from those discussed earlier.

Four types of narrator are employed in *La región más transparente* to present the fictive past: a third person omniscient narrator, in narratives reminiscent of those referred to in the case of *Las buenas conciencias* and the third person segments of *La muerte de Artemio Cruz*; a third person narrator whose omniscience is generally restricted in scope to the perspective of a single character and who conveys a form of monologue which may be referred to as "locuciones evocadas"; a first person narrator represented by a character in a dialogue with Cienfuegos; and, finally, a first person narrator whose thoughts are conveyed by means of a direct interior monologue. Furthermore, some segments of the past are characterized by more than one of the above methods. However, although we have identified four different narrative forms, it appears that, in general terms, as is clear from the typographical disposition of the text, Fuentes himself only distinguished between two different categories. Both the interior monologues and the "locuciones evocadas" are printed in italics and, by this means, are distinguished from the rest of the text.

Of the total of eleven segments pertaining to the fictive past, four are third person narratives of the first type identified above. That is to say that, the narrator is fully omniscient, and the narrative, when considered in isolation of its context, bears no relationship to a subjective view of time since it presents an exterior view of the characters and actions. The passages themselves contain no indication that the entire content of the narrative is, in fact, the product of a character's memory. The four passages in question, entitled "Gervasio Pola" (pp. 78-90), "Los de Ovando" (pp. 91-100), "Norma Larragoiti" (pp. 124-131), and "Feliciano Sánchez" (pp. 379-384), all share these basic characteristics. All except "Norma Larragoiti" share a further fundamental characteristic: they are all "second hand" memories. In each case, the events remembered do not pertain to the personal past of the character whose memory serves as a point of departure for the narrative, but to that of another character who is either dead or removed from the immediate events of the novel. Thus the life of Gervasio Pola is remembered by his son, Rodrigo; that of Feliciano Sánchez by by Federico Robles; and that of Lorenza de Ovando by her niece, Pimpinela. Furthermore, the three characters, Rodrigo Pola, Pimpinela de Ovando, and Federico Robles, whose memories serve as the points of departure for the reconstruction of the past of other characters, also figure in other passages of the novel in which they recall the events of their own personal past.

Since the "memories" depicted in "Gervasio Pola", "Los de Ovando", "Norma Larragoiti" and "Feliciano Sánchez" are presented in a third person narrative by means of a technique which belies their quality as personal memories, Fuentes employs certain devices, much as he also does in *Las buenas conciencias* and *La muerte de Artemio Cruz*, intended to persuade the reader that they are indeed memories. He insists on indicating that the memory of a character is involved, and in some cases, goes to certain lengths to emphasize the point. For example, in "Gervasio Pola", the first memory sequence included in the novel, Ixca Cienfuegos is portrayed as urging Rodrigo Pola to remember before the story of Gervasio Pola is actually begun. Rodrigo's thoughts, transcribed in italics, are already beginning to flow as the narrative of the past itself begins:

> --Escoge . . . y recuerda
> --Recuerdos . . . *Yo soy Rodrigo Pola*
> --*Y más, y más* . . .
> . . .
> --¿Lo recuerdas?
> --Mi padre *mi padre mi padre*
>
> GERVASIO POLA. (pp. 77 and 78)

The story of Gervasio Pola is then narrated almost entirely by a third person omniscient narrator. In "Los de Ovando", even if it does seem somewhat implausible that the character in question could recall the content of the narrative, it is also stressed that the passage is a product of a character's reminiscences. In this case Pimpinela de Ovando remembers the life of her aunt, Lorenza:

> Pimpinela de Ovando caminaba erguida y perfumada . . . cifras exactas se dibujaban, como en una pizarra de aire, dentro de su cabeza . . . Las cifras se borraron y se dibujó la imagen de la tía Lorenza, teñida de años y recuerdos, superpuesta a otras muchas imágenes. (pp. 90-91)

This passage indicates, moreover, that a "double" memory is involved: Pimpinela is portrayed as remembering her aunt who, in turn, is depicted as enveloped in her own memories. The section entitled "Feliciano Sánchez" also contains a clear indication that its content is remembered by Robles and that some degree of subjective recollection is involved:

> Federico Robles permanecía solo, antiguo y olvidado como la gota más vieja del mar, con los ojos cerrados, inviolable en este último apoyo de su conciencia, en el recuerdo definitivo que sólo este día, el del derrumbe de su poder, pudo convocar. . . .
>
> FELICIANO SANCHEZ (p. 379)

This passage is immediately followed by the narration of events which led to Feliciano Sánchez's death. In much the same way, at the beginning of the passage in which the past of Norma Larragoiti is described, she is portrayed as if in the process of remembering:

> El sol era el primer recuerdo: sol chato y desierto del Norte, y después el sol alto, llagado y oscuro de México. Primer recuerdo y primer ser;

> quiso ser el sol, sentir una semilla
> de astro que le calcinara el vientre
> y repitió, en el calor del sol, su
> nombre, una, dos, varias veces. (p. 124)

The point that these passages depict memories of the past and that, as such, the flow of time has certain subjective connotations is further underscored at the end of each passage. It is indicated that although, in the course of a memory, an extended period of the past may have been recalled, little objective present time has elapsed. At the end of each memory, the reader and the character still occupy almost the same moment in the fictive present as they did before it was interrupted by the intrusion of the past. For example, Rodrigo Pola's memory ends with the same phrase with which it began, "--Mi padre, mi padre, mi padre" (pp. 78 and 90), as if nothing had transpired in the interval, and Pimpinela de Ovando, at the end of her reminiscences, is described in the same terms as when she first began to recall the past: "Pimpinela, disfrazada por sus anteojos oscuros" (pp. 90 and 100). She is still on her way to Regules' office.

The subjectivity with which Fuentes attempts to colour the segments of the past through these techniques is, nevertheless, inevitably diluted by the fact that the narratives pertaining to the fictive past do not, themselves, have subjective connotations. The reader is not allowed to discover the thought process of the characters, but is constantly kept at a distance by the presence of a third person omniscient narrator. In these particular cases, the narrator does not even narrate what passes through the mind of the character. Rather, the character's mind is ignored while the narrator describes the event that took place directly and the character whose memory has served as a point of departure for the recollection of the past simply becomes another object in the story that is narrated. Moreover, the narrator, as in _Las buenas conciencias_ and _La muerte de Artemio Cruz_, has considerably more knowledge than the character. This fact is particularly obvious in the case of Rodrigo and Pimpinela, whose "memories" could not extend as far as the period which they describe, and whose knowledge of the events must be limited to whatever they could have gathered from hearsay. Moreover, Rodrigo was born after his father's death and never learned of the past from his mother. Even in the case of Robles' memory in "Feliciano Sánchez" and Norma's in "Norma Larragoiti", however, it is impossible to ignore the evidence of the narrator's more complete knowledge. In fact, it appears that the one aspect that links these four segments in terms of the use of the third person omniscient narrator is precisely the fact that the characters who remember either have only partial knowledge of what took place, or are reluctant to provide a complete picture of the past. Rodrigo and Pimpinela have only second-hand information of the past; Robles and his wife Norma are the two characters of the novel most unwilling to remember it.

The distance created by the third person narrator between the reader and the subjective recollections indulged in by the characters is further magnified by the presence of Ixca Cienfuegos, a mysterious, ubiquitous "intruder" and "witness" to the reminiscences of the other characters. Although his presence is less intrusive in the segments under discussion than in the narrative segments to be dealt with later, it does contribute to the conversion of the subjective recollection into an objective narrative. Although he does not interpose himself in the narration of the memory, Cienfuegos acts as a "sieve" or "screen", through whom everything is seen, or even as a "mirror" in whom everything is reflected. As such, he constitutes another barrier between the reader and the subject, the character. Cienfuegos has a mysterious effect on the characters, in that he needs only to be near them in order for the past to be remembered. This is, in effect, the case of the characters whose memories prompt the sections entitled "Los de Ovando", "Norma Larragoiti" and "Feliciano Sánchez". Ixca does not actually encourage them to think or to speak of the past, but merely happens to be in the same general location as they are. He watches Pimpinela as she passes by on her way to Régules' office, and at one point even manages to exchange glances with her. In the case of Norma Larragoiti's recollections, Ixca is actually in her home, to which he had been invited for a drink by her husband, Federico. Similarly, in the case of Robles' recollection of Feliciano Sánchez, Ixca is present but does not urge Robles to remember. On the other hand, he does oblige Rodrigo to think of his dead father, an action which gives rise to the section entitled "Gervasio Pola".

The internal objectivity of these segments of past time is not only a result of the presence of the omniscient narrator and Ixca Cienfuegos, but to a large degree is a consequence of the attention given to the objective measurement of time, both in terms of real events of recorded history and the chronological continuity in the sequence of events of the plot itself. As in La muerte de Artemio Cruz, the lives of the characters are made to coincide with national historical events. "Gervasio Pola" (1913) is temporally situated at the height of the military conflict in the Mexican Revolution; "Los de Ovando", at the beginning of the military conflict; when Norma Larragoiti was five years old, the "Plan de Agua Prieta" (24 April, 1925) had just been announced; Feliciano Sánchez was a popular, anti-government leader in the Mexico of 1938. It can be said that each one of these sections represents a particular stage in the history of Mexico, from before the 1910 Revolution until 1954, that is outlined in the novel as a whole. Thus, "Los de Ovando" represents the final days of the Porfiriato and the first signs of the Revolution, while "Gervasio Pola" and "Feliciano Sánchez" represent different stages of the Revolution itself. Gervasio Pola, Feliciano Sánchez, and the Ovando family, the characters referred to in the past narrative sequences, are not only portrayed as having lived at the time of certain precise historical events, but as actually involved in them. In other words, their lives are intimately associated with the history of Mexico. Seen in another light, it may be said that Fuentes chose to create figures of some historical interest as the principal characters of his novels.

The many historical references, often

accompanied by dates, particularly in "Los de Ovando", also help to provide the chronological framework within which the narratives develop. In all of them, when seen in isolation from the fictive present and the rest of the text, a high degree of chronological continuity is established. There are generally few breaks in the narrative. Chronological continuity is maintained through the obvious, causal sequence of events, and through specific information concerning time, such as in the following examples, which are taken from different narrative segments:

> Entonces les azotó el pecho el frío que anuncia el fin de la redonda medianoche y el principio de la madrugada. (p. 81)
>
> La madrugada de un domingo, antes de que las campanas parroquiales comenzaran a tañer, Gervasio caminó amodorrado por la galería hueca de Belén. (p. 89)
>
> Iba a cumplir cinco años el niño. (p. 95)
>
> Cuando cumplió diecisiete años y los tíos le organizaron un baile, conoció a un muchacho de la Prepa. . . . (p. 124)

Moreover, in addition to the dates which refer to events of national historical importance and those attributed to each section of the text in the index of the novel, there are a number of dates included in the text itself which also serve to fix the chronology of the narrative:

> Una noche de marzo, en 1913 . . . (p. 78)
>
> Cerca de París, poseían casa, en Neuilly, y a ella se trasladaron en el otoño de 1915 doña Lorenza y su hijo. (p. 93)
>
> Hasta la celda de Feliciano llegaban los rumores de la fiesta: 15 de septiembre. (p. 379)

With the exception of "Feliciano Sanchez", which is narrated completely in the third person by an omniscient narrator, the impression of temporal objectivity in the four segments we are discussing is lessened only by a few brief passages of direct interior monologue recording the thoughts of certain characters. In the case of "Gervasio Pola", it is mainly Gervasio's thoughts that are recorded by means of interior monologue (pp. 81-82, 83-84, 87, 88-89). In "Los de Ovando", snatches of conversation from the past flit through Lorenza's mind as she remembers (pp. 91-92, 93, 94, 95, 96-97, 98, 99). In both these cases, the verisimilitude of the narrative form employed is questionable since the entire memory passage attributed to Lorenza, including the interior monologue, is supposedly remembered, not by Lorenza, but by Pimpinela, and that attributed to Gervasio is remembered by Rodrigo. The passages of interior monologue in "Norma Larragoiti" pose less of a problem in terms of their verisimilitude since the entire memory segment, including the interior monologue, can be attributed to Norma alone. The overall effect of combining different narrative forms in these passages, however, does not result in a significant disruption of their internal objective chronology. It might even be argued that the inclusion of brief passages of dialogue and interior monologue in a third person narrative serve to heighten the impression of the narrator's omniscience.

Each of the four segments we are discussing is a single interruption of the fictive present in order to introduce the past. This, together with the fact that the past narrative is developed, like the fictive present, with an eye to objective time, appears to lessen the effect of disruption caused by introducing the past. In spite of the fact that they represent different levels of time, the narrative in the fictive present and these examples of the fictive past have much in common. Nevertheless, there is little doubt that the fictive present is rendered temporally less objective by the presentation of interruptions of the past as memory.

The recourse to dialogue as a means of presenting the fictive past is used relatively sparingly in _La región más transparente_ and is slightly less objective than the passages of the fictive past we have already discussed. In fact, only one complete past narrative segment, and parts of two others, in which different forms predominate, are narrated through dialogue. The example in which dialogue prevails throughout is entitled "Librado Ibarra" (pp. 180-188), and consists of Ibarra's narration of his own past to Ixca Cienfuegos. The narrative that results from the use of this technique is representative of a more subjective sense of time than those passages already discussed in one respect only: the character himself narrates his own memories and the past is therefore coloured by his viewpoint. Unlike the passages already discussed, however, in "Librado Ibarra" there is no need to give any emphasis outside of the passage itself that the character is in fact in the process of remembering because this is repeatedly indicated in his own words. Since Ibarra makes constant reference to past time, it is easily assumed that he is remembering. As with the third person narratives, his memories are induced by the presence of Ixca Cienfuegos, who nevertheless offers only a very slight counterpoint to Ibarra's monologue. Even so, the spoken word in dialogue is the least subjective level of human consciousness and, in this sense, the dialogue in the segment entitled "Librado Ibarra" is akin to the use of the diary in "Chac Mool". The significant difference, of course, is that the dialogue form makes it possible to involve two characters directly. If the third person omniscient narrative was employed to present the past of characters in their absence or in spite of themselves, the dialogue form is used for a character who does not hesitate to recall the past. In addition, the author's interest in the third person narrative was in the possibility of portraying the past without the interpretation or re-interpretation of a character. With a dialogue, however, the author appears to be more interested in discovering the point of view of a character.

As in the group of passages discussed above in which the past is narrated by a third person, objective time also plays an important role in the development of the past narrative in the form of dialogue. References to history provide a constant objective basis to the narrative:

> Los nuevos gobiernos atraían a todos, a los obreros, a los campesinos, a los capitalistas, a los intelectuales, a los profesionales, ¡hasta Diego Rivera! Al revés de los científicos de Díaz que se habían organizado de arriba abajo, la Revolución primero se atraía a todas las fuerzas vivas del país. (p. 182)

> Esos fueron para mí los frutos de la Revolución --si es que la Revolución y el Jefe Máximo eran la misma cosa. (p. 184)

> Luego se salió de eso y me dijo que en el campo mexicano no había nada que hacer, que eso quedaba fuera del mercado en virtud de las leyes agrarias, sobre todo ahora que iba a ser Presidente este Cárdenas, que era un hombre de cuidado. (p. 184)

Dates that are particularly relevant to Ibarra's personal past as well as to the history of Mexico are provided throughout the narrative: "Ahí me tuvo usted hasta el año de 34" (p. 184); "Para 1936 ya no había quién lo parara" (p. 185); "A Feliciano lo mataron un 15 de septiembre: la ley fuga" (p. 186). These dates, in addition to providing a link with objective historical time, help to maintain the chronological continuity of the narrative, which is also consolidated by other temporal references, such as to the time of day, and the length of time that elapses between one event and another.

Although the content of the dialogue allows an objective chronology of the past to be established, the recounting of the past in this form results in a narrative which is closely linked to the fictive present, precisely because it is in the fictive present that the speech of the first person narrator is located. As the past is recreated by this narrator, there is no obvious movement from the objective time of the developing fictive present to interior time.

Moreover, unlike the thought process, which may be depicted as occurring in a brief span of time, words in a dialogue need time in which to be spoken. This link with the fictive present is further reinforced, in "Librado Ibarra", by the presence of a third person omniscient narrator who intervenes periodically (pp. 180, 182, 184, 186, 187, 188) to describe the present condition of Ibarra and Ixca Cienfuegos. The presentation of the past through dialogue thus provides one of the smoothest transitions from the fictive present to the past, allowing the reader to be conscious of both spheres at once. However, in terms of an objective re-presentation of the past, it is probably the least reliable method since the focus of attention does not necessarily fall on what the character _thinks_, but only on what he wishes to _say_.

A similar recourse to dialogue occurs, although to a lesser extent, in two further segments in which the past is otherwise predominantly presented through indirect interior monologues. In "Federico Robles" (pp. 100-118) and "Rodrigo Pola" (pp. 131-156), the past is presented through the interweaving of dialogue and interior monologue. This technique seems particularly suited to the characters of Federico Robles and Rodrigo Pola both of whom are reluctant to be entirely open with Ixca Cienfuegos, yet who, as two of the most important characters of the novel, provide interesting re-interpretations of the past. Their re-interpretations occur in the dialogue portions of the text, interspersed throughout the narrative, while the interior monologues, distinguished textually from the dialogue by italics and quotation marks, are used to convey flashbacks. In addition to providing an interesting counterpoint, the effect of the use of dialogue in both of these segments is similar to the employment of dialogue in "Librado Ibarra": it brings the reader back to the fictive present. In the case of "Rodrigo Pola" and "Federico Robles", it also prevents the reader from becoming completely absorbed in the mind time created by the interior monologue sequences. In other words, it adds objectivity to the representation of time in these segments.

The two fictive past narratives mentioned above, "Federico Robles" and "Rodrigo Pola", as well as two others, "Pimpinela de Ovando" (pp. 292-301) and "Mercedes Zamacona" (pp. 409-428), convey the fictive past through "locuciones evocadas". By "locuciones evocadas",we refer to a form of stream of consciousness in which the characters whose thoughts are portrayed are referred to in the third person. Although a third person narrator is employed, this technique is not to be confused with what we have already described as a third person narrative in which the narrator has complete omniscience. In such passages in which the past is evoked, the knowledge of the third person narrator is limited and does not go beyond that which the characters themselves could reasonably know. Although there are other, fundamental differences, these characteristics are shared by the four past narratives we have identified for discussion at this point. Whereas the monologues contained in "Federico Robles" and "Rodrigo Pola" are periodically interrupted by the fictive present and by the past presented in dialogue, the monologue contained in "Pimpinela de Ovando" is continuous and represents a single disruption of the fictive present. "Mercedes Zamacona" is somewhat more difficult to categorize. Although it shares the majority of the characteristics of "Pimpinela de Ovando", unlike other segments of this type, the monologue evoking the past is not italicized. However, there seems to be no real reason for this typographical distinction.

Since the fictive past is presented essentially through a third person narrator in these four passages, it is repeatedly indicated not only that the characters are remembering, but also that, as their memories flit through their minds, very little time passes in the objective, real world around them. In "Federico Robles", for example, the fact that Robles is thinking rather than speaking and that Ixca Cienfuegos understands him anyway, is clearly indicated in several instances. This is particularly true of the following extract which precedes a passage given in italics, the typographical device generally used in this novel to indicate the thoughts of a character:[13]

> Robles no habló. Detuvo su mirada en la de Ixca, y éste en la de Federico. Robles se olvidó de sus manos y su cuerpo; dejó caer los brazos y levantó la espesa cortina de su mirada. Su mirada y la de Cienfuegos se fundían en una sola pupila, pupila de recuerdos, líquida y punzante. Ixca no se permitió mover un músculo. Como un ídolo elocuente, con su rigidez invitaba a Robles no a abrir los labios sino a abrir los ojos. . . . (p. 112)

After the italicized section, the narrative is resumed with the comment: "No pasaron dos minutos entre las dos miradas" (p. 115), following which Robles begins to speak again. The contrast between the two minutes of objective time which passes as Robles remembers, and the period of time remembered, emphasizes the differences between objective and subjective time. The scenes and snatches of conversations from the past flit through his mind in an instant which has little relationship with the years of objective time during which those same events and conversations took place in the past. Similarly, at the beginning and end of the sequence attributed to Pimpinela's memory, and printed in italics, she is described as listening to a record, engaged in the same activity (pp. 291 and 301), and the same words are used to begin and end the sequence: "La niña Pimpinela no quiere comer" (pp. 292 and 301).

It is significant that the role of Ixca Cienfuegos, as the instigator of thoughts of the past, occurs even in the context of narratives in which a more subjective sense of time is evident. However, while Cienfuegos does intervene in the dialogue which forms part of the segments dealing with Rodrigo Pola and Federico Robles, his presence is merely felt in the scenes depicting the more subjective thought sequences of Pimpinela and Mercedes. In the case of Pimpinela, Cienfuegos is no longer present when she does begin to remember. He had left the scene when she showed a reluctance to think of the past. In "Mercedes Zamacona", Cienfuegos never actually meets Mercedes. Her memories begin to flow when she is told that a man bearing Ixca's description is waiting to see her (p. 410).

The four narratives included in this group portray a more subjective level of time than the passages discussed initially. While none of them is based on a random association of ideas in the true stream of consciousness mode, which is, in any event, impeded by the third person narrator, there is considerably less attention to the creation of chronological continuity or to the linking of events with real historical time. In "Federico Robles", there is a closer approach to some kind of historical objectivity as a result of references to old newspaper headlines and the reproduction of an entire speech of Froilán Reyero which dealt with the revolutionary struggle (pp. 103-106). Similarly, although some chronological continuity is to be noted in the development of the narrative in "Rodrigo Pola", "Pimpinela de Ovando" and "Mercedes Zamacona", there are few specific temporal references.

In general, the effect on the fictive present of the novel produced by the inclusion of these four narratives --"Federico Robles", "Rodrigo Pola", "Pimpinela de Ovando" and "Mercedes Zamacona"-- is to render it more subjective. However, there are some differences among them. As we have already indicated, the passages entitled "Federico Robles" and "Rodrigo Pola" represent an intermittent interruption of the fictive present narrative. As a result, the fictive present narrative surrounding these two episodes is much more fragmented and therefore more subjective than in the case of "Pimpinela de Ovando" and "Mercedes Zamacona", with which the fictive present is interrupted in only a single sequence.

The final type of presentation of the fictive past is the most subjective of all the interpolated narratives of the past. In "Rosenda" (pp. 224-237) and "Hortensia Chacón" (pp. 345-355), the interior flow of mind time is presented almost without interruption in direct interior monologues. However, even in these segments of the novel, the monologues are not entirely in the stream of consciousness mode. Instead of a narrative based only on the principle of random association, in the manner of the first person fragments of La muerte de Artemio Cruz, the narratives in "Rosenda" and "Hortensia Chacón" combine the characteristics of a first person introspective narrative and some free association of ideas.

As in other past narratives, Fuentes makes a point of indicating that the characters are not speaking, that in fact there are few formulated words. For example, Rosenda Pola speaks only a few words; the rest are "unpronounceable thoughts":

> Ixca alargó el brazo . . . para llevarlo a los labios transparentes de la anciana hecha de costras de cebolla que gemía ronca y desarticulada desde el lecho de latón, dando a sus ojos una infinidad de expresiones a medida que las palabras y los pensamientos impronunciables le cruzaban, como una inundación impetuosa, por el cerebro. (p. 233)

Hortensia Chacón, too, speaks very little: the majority of what Ixca Cienfuegos learns from her is through her thoughts. After ten pages of reminiscences, the reader is told: "Decidió, con rencor, romper el bochornoso silencio . . ." (p. 355), clearly indicating that she has not been speaking up to this point. The flow of thought of Hortensia Chacón and Rosenda Pola is interrupted only for brief moments when they utter a few words to Ixca Cienfuegos, words which connect the thoughts that Ixca reads in their eyes.

The effect of these segments of purely subjective time on the fictive present is to suspend it, to disrupt it in a more radical manner than in any other parts of the text in which the fictive past is introduced. Except for the few words uttered by Hortensia and Rosenda, there is no point of reference, no link, between the objective fictive present and the thought process, once the latter has begun to flow.

In terms of the presentation of the past it is evident that the interior monologue provides perhaps the least coherent and least reliable portrayal of past events. The narration of those events is completely coloured by the consciousness of the character. By contrast, the use of the third person omniscient narrator is most reliable in terms of presenting an objective picture of the past. The other two methods, dialogue and monologues evoking the past, are compromises between these two extremes. They allow a somewhat objective view of the past while also permitting the point of view of the character to be expressed. From this it may be concluded that Fuentes was interested in portraying the personal histories of Rosenda Pola and Hortensia Chacón; that he wanted to highlight the historical past associated with Gervasio Pola, the Ovando family and Feliciano Sánchez; and that he wanted to emphasize a combination of the personal and historical past in the case of Robles, Rodrigo Pola, Pimpinela, Mercedes Zamacona, Norma Larragoiti and Librado Ibarra.

Approximately one-third of the pages of _La región más transparente_ are devoted to a recovery of past time, both historical and personal. This, in itself, is an indication of the significance of the past in the novel and its effect on its temporal structure. As has been pointed out, recourse to the fictive past generally implies some degree of subjective time. When this fact is considered in combination with the manner in which the fictive present of La región más transparente, as described in our earlier chapter, is affected by other, non-objective elements, it can be concluded that the total time structure of the novel is predominantly subjective.

NOTES

[1] A.A. Mendilow, Time and the Novel (New York, 1972), pp. 96-97.

[2] It should be emphasized that these references to the past are to a past that is, in a sense, external to the novel since they allude to a time that may be considered as being prior to the beginning of its fictive present. Such references should therefore be distinguished from those which must be associated more directly with the fictive present itself and are internal to the novel in that they allude to incidents that have occurred earlier, but as part of its "present" action. Thus, in the first person narrative segments of La muerte de Artemio Cruz, references to events that occurred before the day of Artemio's death are to an external past, whereas those which allude to an earlier moment of the day on which he dies, such as the frequent repetitions discussed in our previous chapter, refer to an internal past and represent a recuperation, not of the fictive past, but of the fictive present. In this chapter, we are concerned only with those allusions which refer the reader to the fictive past.

[3] Mendilow, p. 118.

[4] See Percy Lubbock, "The craft of Fiction: Picture, Drama and Point of View", in Approaches to the Novel, ed. Robert Scholes (San Francisco, 1966), pp. 244-271.

[5] This method is to be distinguished from that in which a first person narrator is responsible for the narration of the entire story, most of which is likely his own personal past. In this case, the narrative of past events constitutes another fictive present, subordinated to the "present" in which the narrator finds himself at the moment of narrating. The emphasis is not on "mind time" as such but on events as they occurred. The narrator in this case narrates the story of his past, summarizing his own past thoughts as well as the exterior actions of the characters. Such is the method employed by Proust in A la recherche du temps perdu.

[6] There is some difference between the use of the diary in "Chac Mool" and in "Tlactocatzine, del jardín de Flandes". Whereas, in "Chac Mool", the diary is used to recuperate only a certain period of the past, in "Tlactocatzine, del jardín de Flandes", it is the basis of the total story and, more importantly, constitutes the fictive present of the narrative.

[7] Given the formal characteristics of Las buenas conciencias, the narrator's precognition in this particular case is not difficult to accept. After the first two and a half pages of the novel, the reader is fully aware that the outcome of the action of the novel belongs to a past that is already known to the narrator.

[8] The principal difference between the two types of memories is the fact that while those of La muerte de Artemio Cruz are narrated in the third person, those of A la recherche du temps perdu are narrated in the first person. Moreover, Proust's involuntary memories appear to focus on the recreation of a sensation more than anything else; Artemio's memories re-create a past that is mainly conveyed through an objective narrative.

[9] Mario Benedetti, "Carlos Fuentes: del signo barroco al espejismo", in Homenaje a Carlos Fuentes, ed. Helmy F. Giacoman (Long Island City, 1971), p. 100.

[10] The eleventh episode situates the young Artemio in the pre-revolutionary years (pp. 280-306); the third and seventh segments depict Artemio involved in the military struggle (pp. 63-85 and 170-202); in the second and fourth episodes Artemio is shown to be directly involved in the post-revolutionary land

reforms (pp. 30-55 and 93-116); in the fifth episode Artemio is a participant in the political intrigue that followed the Revolution (pp. 125-138); and in the first episode his role in the industrialization of the country is portrayed. In addition to these direct connections with the history of Mexico, Artemio is also shown to be linked to the Spanish Civil War through his son Lorenzo (pp. 228-241). Finally, in the second of the second person narrative segments (pp. 35-36), on account of Artemio's indigenous ancestry, he is also related to pre-Columbian times.

[11] Nelson Osorio, "Un aspecto de la estructura de *La muerte de Artemio Cruz*", in *Homenaje a Carlos Fuentes*, ed. Helmy F. Giacoman, pp. 125-146.

[12] Nelson Osorio, pp. 139, 140, 143-144.

[13] Italics are also used to distinguish other types of narrative from the rest of the text: the first two and a half pages of the text, which appear to represent the thoughts of Ixca Cienfuegos; other, random thoughts of characters sporadically conveyed in the fictive present; songs; and the vignettes contained in Part II, which we have discussed in Chapter I.

CHAPTER III

THE FUSION OF PAST AND PRESENT

The discussion undertaken in the first two chapters of this study indicates that a clearly distinguishable fictive present and an equally well defined fictive past are the two most significant formal characteristics of Fuentes' early fiction. While the fictive present has been shown to be a major factor influencing the unfolding of the narrative and the elaboration of a basic structure upon which that narrative is founded, the fictive past has also been identified as a significant element contributing to the form of Fuentes' novels and short stories. It is nevertheless evident that, although it has been possible to separate and describe the characteristics of the fictive past and the present in Fuentes' works, these two periods of time do not exist and are not to be understood independently of each other. The reader is not expected to regard what he has read as a composite of fragmented entities. On the contrary, although confronted in some of Fuentes' works with a series of texts in which the past and the present of the characters are segregated, the reader must constitute what he has read into a single continuous narrative and must endeavour in some way to combine the different periods of time. Thus, having described the formal characteristics of the representation of the past and present in Fuentes' narratives, it is now necessary to deal with how the text is received by the reader. From another point of view, it may be said that, having seen some of the formal characteristics evident in the creation of a sense of time in Fuentes' works, it is now relevant to consider certain related aspects of content.

In the first instance, even in the context of their apparent separation, it is appropriate to speak of a blending of past and present. In the simplest of terms, it may be said that the disposition of the content in Fuentes' narratives is intended to persuade the reader that past and present should not be segregated and that, regardless of appearances, the formal characteristics of his works serve to promote their fusion. The structure of his works and the mechanisms employed to shift from the present to the past, and vice versa, are designed to lull the reader into an acceptance of the fusion of the two times. The structure of the novels themselves therefore imply that past and present should be seen as one.

As a point of departure for a discussion of the fusion of the past and present in this chapter, it will consequently be useful to review the devices employed as a means of overcoming the sense of fragmentation that appears to arise from the structure of the narrative.

It is obvious that no real problem arises, in this regard, with respect to Aura or the majority of stories in Los días enmascarados. With the exception of "Chac Mool", these works contain no sustained narration of the fictive past. The past and present are not formally separated, but are part of a single, continuous narrative. With all of Fuentes' other early works, however, the need to integrate past and present narratives does arise, and to varying degrees. In "Chac Mool", for instance, the problem is not a major one. In the first place, the true fictive present (the time occupied by the storyteller's narration), is not significant in the development of the story itself, thus allowing the past narrative which we have referred to as the recent past to assume, to all intents and purposes, the function of the fictive present. In the second place, the more remote past is presented in the form of a diary, which is one of the more easily accepted forms of narration of the past. A minimum of mental effort is therefore necessary on the part of the reader in moving from one period of time to another. The abruptness of the shift in time is further diminished by the fact that the past does not appear to intrude on or interrupt the present. The past itself constitutes the subject of a single, continuous narrative sequence and is the principal source of the action that is unfolded, while all interest in the development of the present is temporarily suspended.

The same conclusion may be reached with regard to *Las buenas conciencias*. In spite of the very radical shift from Jaime's present to a remote time some one hundred years before, this single shift in time does not create great problems for the reader. The introduction of the past as a function of Jaime's memory is easily accepted. Moreover, once Jaime starts to remember, the process is not interrupted by references to his present moment. The past is developed continuously until it ultimately merges quite naturally with Jaime's present time. Thus, in *Las buenas conciencias*, as in "Chac Mool", the segregation of the past and present is less affected by the formal characteristics of the narrative.

On the other hand, the integration of the past in *La región más transparente* presents a somewhat more difficult task. Not only are narratives pertaining to the past of the characters separated from the narration of the fictive present, but the problem is compounded by the large proportion of the total text devoted to the past and, also, by the fact that Fuentes has presented it from several points of view. Thus, rather than a continuous series of recollections attributed to a single character, as in Las buenas conciencias, in La región más transparente there are eleven different passages of fictive past attributed to eight different characters in total. Moreover, although the past is introduced in each case as a function of the memory of one of the characters, a number of different techniques, as we have already seen, are employed to obtain this effect. As a result of this situation, the demands placed on the reader to integrate the past and the present vary considerably. It is much easier for the reader to accept the fusion of past and present in Librado Ibarra's narrative of his own past (pp. 180-188), simply because he speaks of it as he remembers it from the perspective of the present. There is, therefore, no categorical change from one period of time to another and no absolute segregation of past and present. A similarly smooth blending of past and present is achieved in the passages attributed to Federico Robles (pp. 100-123) and Rodrigo

Pola (pp. 131-157) for very much the same reasons. In both passages, the characters sometimes speak of their past as they remember it in the present, and, at other times, are depicted, through the use of a "locución evocada", as if in the process of remembering. In comparison with these cases, the most difficult shifts to accept are those in which a radical and sudden break from the present occurs in order to introduce a sustained narration of the past, such as in the segments entitled "Gervasio Pola" (pp. 78-90), "Los de Ovando" (pp. 91-100), "Norma Larragoiti" (pp. 124-131) and "Feliciano Sánchez" (pp. 379-384). Yet, even in these cases, because the past is always shown to be a product of a character's recollections, the reader is invited to combine the past and the present rather than be persuaded to separate them purely as a result of the narrative form employed.

La muerte de Artemio Cruz presents several unique problems with regard to the fusion of past and present. The past is introduced into the narrative by means of a highly artificial structure, in which the narrator's perspective is conveyed through three different narrative persons. The fictive past, as presented in the third person narrative, at first appears to be quite unrelated to the perspective of the first person narrator. However, just as the third person narratives pertaining to the fictive past in La región más transparente, the reader has to accept the blending of the past and present through a number of devices, most of which are not immediately evident to him. The fact that the fictive past segments occur in a rigorously observed sequential order, which also includes the segments representing the fictive present and the sections of the novel narrated in the second person, means that they cannot be avoided and cannot be segregated entirely. A certain relationship between the past and the present is therefore maintained as a result of their constant juxtaposition. At the same time, the second person narrative segments, in which the past, present and future are combined, serve to create an effective transition from the present, in the first person narrative segments, to the past, in the third person narrative segments. Above all, however, as in Las buenas conciencias and in La región más transparente, the reader is ultimately obliged to accept, at least to some degree, that the third person narrative and the past are functions of the memory of a character, in this case the memory of Artemio Cruz. The persistent indications to this effect, which we have already discussed in our previous chapter, cannot be ignored. As a result of these devices, it could not be concluded categorically that the reader of *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* is led to separate the past from the present irrevocably. As in the case of the other works discussed, the formal characteristics of narrative structure, even when considered by themselves in isolation of other considerations, are not necessarily conducive to such a conclusion.

Notwithstanding the preceding comments, it might be said that, whatever the textual disposition of the fictive past in relation to the fictive present and regardless of the degree of chronological fragmentation to which the narrative is submitted, the reader will always endeavour to reconstitute the events narrated in a novel according to the chronology of their occurrence. In addition to this natural, self-imposed exercise, which leads to a form of integration of past and present, the reader is also obliged to undertake another exercise, imposed on him by the author, as a result of the fragmentation of the narrative. Rather than only placing events in a linear sequence produced by a chain of causes and effects, the sporadic interpolation of the past, in *La región más transparente*, or its methodical interruption of the present, in *La muerte de Artemio Cruz*, oblige the reader to compare what occurs in the present with certain events from the past. Thus, by creating a situation in which comparisons can be more easily made, the formal characteristics of the text contribute to a particular kind of fusion between them. Events and people from the past cannot be forgotten and irrevocably consigned to the past. Not only do they affect the present, but they can recur in the present. By the same token, the recurrence of the past in the present suggests, as will be seen later, that time should not necessarily be understood exclusively in terms of a linear sequence, but should also be thought of as cyclical in nature. These ideas, reinforced in part as a result of the relationship between the past and the present achieved as a product of the textual disposition of Fuentes' narratives, may also be attributed to the nature of the content of his work and, in particular, to the phenomenon in contemporary Spanish American fiction generally known as magical realism.

To some extent, magical realism is the consequence of a certain attitude of indifference towards the traditional distinctions between so-called "reality" and "unreality", between dream and waking, between fantasy, delirium or madness and the tangible, "everyday" world. Although few critics have attempted a formal definition of the phenomenon, there appears to be some consensus as to the implications of magical realism in Spanish American literature. To a certain extent, this sense of magical reality is inherent in what Alejo Carpentier refers to as "lo real maravilloso":

> Lo maravilloso comienza a serlo de manera inequívoca cuando surge de una inesperada alteración de la realidad (el milagro), de una revelación privilegiada de la realidad, de una iluminación inhabitual o singularmente favorecedora de las inadvertidas riquezas de la realidad, de una ampliación de las escalas y categorías de la realidad, percibidas con particular intensidad en virtud de una exaltación del espíritu que lo conduce a un modo de estado límite.[1]

In comparison with this statement, Luis Leal makes the following observations with regards to magical realism:

> El realismo mágico es, más que nada, una actitud ante la realidad . . . En el realismo mágico el escritor se enfrenta a la realidad y trata de desentrañarla, de descubrir lo que hay de misterioso en las cosas, en la vida, en las acciones humanas . . .
>
> En el realismo mágico los acontecimientos claves no tienen una explicación lógica o sicólogica. El mágico realista no trata de copiar (como lo hacen los realistas) o de vulnerar (como lo hacen los surrealistas) la realidad circundante sino de captar el misterio que palpita en las cosas.[2]

By referring to the concept of magical realism we wish to draw attention to certain forms of description in which objective and subjective perceptions of reality are confused. In such descriptions, the distance between separated periods of time is blurred, with the result that it is no longer sufficient to speak in terms of fictive past and fictive present. The sense of reality that is presented corresponds to a total supra-reality which includes all the varied aspects of reality, as if they all existed at at the same time and could be understood on the same plane. In some of Fuentes' early works, an appreciation of his representation of time is affected by these considerations. This is to say that, rather than representing different periods and stages in the progress of time, past and present coexist. The works, or parts of Fuentes' works, in which this phenomenon is most immediately evident generally include elements of the supernatural and several of them, paradoxically, contain no sustained narration of the fictive past. Four of the stories of Los días enmascarados ("Chac Mool", "Tlactocatzine, del jardín de Flandes", "Letanía de la orquídea",[3] and "Por boca de los dioses"), Aura and parts of La región más transparente and La muerte de Artemio Cruz, all share this quality.

In "Chac Mool", the "real" and the "unreal" are blended so well that, by the end of the story, the reader easily finds himself absorbed into the world created by the story without clearly knowing whether it is the "real" world to which he is accustomed or one which is pure fantasy. At the beginning, the reader is introduced to the very routine, contemporary world of a civil servant who happens to be interested in Mexican indigenous art. Then, he is gradually drawn, and without explanation, into a situation that becomes progressively more fantastic. Filiberto, the civil servant, buys a statue of the Mayan rain god, Chac Mool, and, after taking it to his home, discovers that it gradually becomes human while he is subject to a number of unexplained incidents, such as several breakdowns in the household plumbing.

Each of these incidents represents a stage in the gradual usurpation of Filiberto's everyday reality by another reality. After the first breakdown in the plumbing, Filiberto begins to hear unexplained noises at night, which he attributes to his imagination:

> "Desperté a la una: había escuchado un quejido terrible. Pensé en ladrones. Pura imaginación.
>
> "Los lamentos nocturnos han seguido. No sé a qué atribuirlo, pero estoy nervioso." (p. 15)

Subsequently, he finds that the material of which the moss-covered Chac Mool is made is softer to the touch. Filiberto again refuses to accept what his senses tell him is happening: "'No quise creerlo . . . Increíble . . . No quiero escribirlo. . . .'" (p. 17). Even when he is sure that Chac Mool is becoming human, he experiences great difficulty in believing it:

> "No cabe duda: el Chac Mool tiene vello en los brazos.
> "Esto nunca me había sucedido. Tergiversé los asuntos en la oficina; . . . Tendré que ver a un médico, saber si es imaginación, o delirio, o qué, y deshacerme de ese maldito Chac Mool." (p. 18)

The disintegration of Filiberto's sense of stability, which increases at the same rate as his "reality" is transformed by that to which Chac Mool belongs, is confirmed by the fact that the reading of the diary is abandoned in order for the narrator to fill in some gaps in the account of the experiences recorded by Filiberto (pp. 18 and 21). Moreover, Filiberto's acceptance of this other reality, prefaced by a brief discussion on the subject of reality itself (pp. 18-19), is much more noticeable after this point. Chac Mool's changes and his actions are described with what appears to be understanding on Filiberto's part. He tells in his diary how the rain god eventually takes complete charge of his life, ordering him to bring the water which he needs constantly. When Filiberto finally refuses and escapes to Acapulco, he drowns in the ocean, as if punished by the god for his disobedience.

The reader seeking to account for these incidents in the terms of conventional realism may believe one of two things at this point: either Filiberto, as a result, perhaps, of the monotony of his job, has gradually lost his mind and he has imagined the entire episode, or it is all to be dismissed as a fantastic story that has nothing to do with "reality". The end of the story, however, eliminates both possibilities of such a facile explanation. When the narrator (Filiberto's friend), reaches Filiberto's house, Chac Mool appears at the door and speaks to him. Thus, by means of the narrator, who has established himself as perfectly reliable, what had appeared to be fantasy is substantiated as fact. The result is not only a blend of the real and unreal, but also a blend of the present and the past, the contemporary world of Filiberto and that of the atavistic past of the Mexican Indian. Since Chac Mool is shown to be alive in contemporary Mexico, the historical distance of centuries between the past and the present has been anihilated.

Not only is Chac Mool alive in modern Mexico but so are all the Aztec gods: Tlazol, Tepoyollotl, Mayauel, Tezcatlipoca, Izpapalotl, Xolotl, Quetzalcoatl, Tecciztecatl, Ilamatecuhtli.[4] In "Por boca de los dioses", the protagonist Oliverio finds them living in the basement of a modern hotel. The fact that he needs to take an elevator to reach the basement in which they are living should not be seen as an anachronism, but simply as part of the context of everyday contemporary reality in which the events of the story are placed. In comparison with Filiberto, the fusion of different realities brought about through Oliverio is less gradual and appears to present the protagonist with little difficulty in understanding it. In the first place, the story begins with a passage which does not introduce a concrete reality but appears to be more in the realm of the supernatural. The narrator, who is not yet identified as Oliverio, imagines himself besieged and persecuted by beings from the underworld, as he awaits the stroke of midnight, when they are expected to appear. In the second place, even before Oliverio's confrontation with the old gods of Mexico, he is involved in an incident which can best be described as surrealist. In an art gallery, he finds that the mouth of a portrait in a contemporary painting is able to laugh. Oliverio rips off the mouth and carries it about with him in a pail. It accompanies him wherever he goes, speaks for him, and eventually controls all his actions. This may be interpreted as an indication that Oliverio is the "mouthpiece" of contemporary

Mexicans, while the fact that he is eventually killed by the gods confirms the notion of the re-emergence and triumph of the past in the present. In any case, the incident with the mouth clearly prepares an appropriate setting, so that the events that follow, in which Oliverio meets first with Tlazol and finally with the gods of the Aztec Pantheon, become more readily acceptable.

Although the process is less gradual and the two realities are less clearly distinguishable than in "Chac Mool", in "Por boca de los dioses" the past clearly takes over the present, just as the fantastic replaces the real. By the end of the story, the clear focus on contemporary life has disappeared. Oliverio, who had supported modern art against Don Diego's traditional stance and is apparently representative of modern Mexico, is destroyed by the gods from the past. The past is further evoked in the number of the hotel room, 1519, in which Oliverio is staying. Since the number coincides with the date in which Cortés entered Mexico, it is also symbolic of the first significant encounter in Mexico between European and indigenous American cultures, evoking both the conflicts and the compromises that have arisen as a consequence of the contact between two civilizations and their respective philosophies. The foundation is thereby laid for the sense of opposition between the past and the present which pervades the entire story. The present is not only meshed with the indigenous past, but with the events of the Conquest period of Mexican history.

Very much the same effect is achieved in "Tlactocatzine, del jardín de Flandes", the story of a man who finds himself in a house haunted by the ghost of Carlota, wife of the Emperor Maximilian, ruler of Mexico between 1864 and 1867. In this story also, a sense of the fantastic progressively predominates, as the protagonist and the reader are slowly drawn into "another reality", which both are made to accept. As in "Chac Mool", the situation established at the beginning of the story is clearly contemporary with modern times. The protagonist is the friend of an adventurous businessman, Brambila, who has bought a lavish old mansion in which he plans to entertain his North American business associates. The ambience of contemporary society is further reinforced by references to Brambila's frequent plane trips to the Uni[illegible] States (p. 38), and to the practice of demolishing old mansions in order to replace them by businesses and offices (p. 37). This situation, however, is contrasted almost immediately with the old world elegance of the house, which is described in detail. As in "Chac Mool", the old house also serves as the appropriate setting for the development of a plot which contains elements of fantasy. The first hints of "another reality", however, are very slight and are not at all startling to the narrator-protagonist. He simply attributes it to the season of the year:

> Hoy, aquí, sí he vuelto a experimentar, con un dejo nórdico, la llegada del otoño. Sobre el jardín que observo mientras escribo, se ha desbaratado un velo gris; . . . El humo del otoño cubre el jardín hasta las tapias, y casi podría decirse que se escuchan pasos, lentos, con peso de respiración, entre las hojas caídas. (p. 41)

Later, he begins to feel gradually overwhelmed by what he himself recognises as "another world": "Si ya en la casa rozaba la epidermis de otro mundo, en el jardín me pareció llegar a sus nervios . . . Era un paisaje ficticio, inventado. ¡El jardín no estaba en México" (pp. 42-43). The protagonist is thereby somewhat prepared for the appearance of a figure in that "fictitious garden". When it does appear to him (p. 43), he does not attempt to explain it, but rather tries to attach himself to those things which remind him of his everyday existence, such as the telephone or the movies: "No hay teléfono en la casa, pero podría salir a la avenida, llamar a mis amigos, irme al Roxy . . ." (p. 44). He realizes, however, that a strange force compels him to stay in the house with his gaze fixed on the garden, and he tries to convince himself that there is nothing unusual in what is happening to him: "No me voy a asustar porque alquien saltó la tapia y entró al jardín" (p. 44). When the ghost appears again, the protagonist is forced to accept the existence in the garden of someone who does not appear to be real. He describes the figure in detail, as he watches it disappear, and ensures that his bedroom door is well locked. The next stage in his gradual acceptance of the presence of the ghost is precipitated by a note which he receives from her. From then on, the protagonist begins to expect the ghost, to await her appearance and possibly some sign from her. He is no longer apprehensive, but desires to speak to her. Finally, after receiving a love note from her, he joins her in the garden. This is the final stage of his acceptance of the other reality. He becomes Maximilian, Carlota's husband. The real and the unreal, and the past and the present, are thereby fused and become one. The past has usurped the position of the present.

Compared to the majority of the other stories of Los días enmascarados, "El que inventó la pólvora" presents a much less literal interpretation of the idea of the fusion of past and present. That is to say that the past does not reappear in the present in a form in which it may be easily identified. A symbolic return to the past is effected when the narrator, who has sped through a dizzying series of changes in a relatively short period of time, reaches a point which appears to be the beginning of human history. In this story, in which the idea of rapid consumption is pushed to its most absurd conclusions, civilization is shown stripped of all vestiges of an industrialized society and finally returned to a purer state in which nothing but man and the natural earth exists. It is in this sense only that the past and present meet.

In all of the short stories discussed above, with the exception of "Por boca de los dioses", in which the process is presented somewhat differently, a distinctly "real" world is established at the beginning of the story, only to be gradually fused with an "unreal" world which is introduced and slowly accepted by the characters and the reader. There is little direct contrast between the two "realities", but rather a gradual blurring of a sense of demarcation between them, or an alteration of everyday reality, until a single supra-reality remains. The impression of contrast is minimized by the fact that the reader is not presented at the beginning with two conflicting views, but only with one, which is compatible with his own normal sense of reality. Like the characters, the reader is unwittingly drawn into a reality which he did not anticipate.

This is also the procedure employed in Aura. The "real", contemporary world, which Felipe leaves on entering Consuelo's old mansion, is finally replaced by the "unreal" situation into which he is ultimately assimilated. In this novel, more than in any of Fuentes' other early novels, the past reappears in the present and totally absorbs it. Its reappearance is more substantial than the return of Artemio's past to haunt or to help him, or the return of Federico Robles' past to disturb him. In Aura, the past absorbs the present and replaces it, with the result that any distinction between them disappears. Yet Felipe becomes aware that it is the past in which he is being enveloped only when he reads the General's memoirs and finds that the widow Consuelo lives constantly in the past, and intends to maintain her youth by whatever means necessary. Felipe himself, regressing in time, actually becomes the General, her husband.

It is suggested in the novel that an element of insanity is involved: the General mentions in his memoirs that his wife had appeared to be insane and had the habit of taking drugs to maintain her youth.

It is also possible to explain the whole situation as pure fantasy on Felipe's part: perhaps he is delirious; the strange, damp atmosphere of the house may have made him ill; or he may have been drugged in the course of one of the old lady's experiments with the numerous plants in the house. But the events of the story are not to be "explained away" in this manner. Like the protagonist of "Tlactocatzine, del jardín de Flandes", which in many ways seems to be a first draft of Aura, Felipe Montero is gradually lured away from the "real" existence that he knew, into another "reality" in which, by the end of the story, he appears to participate quite willingly.

As in "Tlactocatzine, del jardín de Flandes", where the protagonist is situated from the beginning in an ordinary, contemporary reality, Felipe is initially presented as living the very routine, everyday existence of a part-time school teacher and historian. However, Felipe's absorption into Consuelo's world is a much slower process and his resistance is apparently stronger than that of the protagonist of the short story. This is primarily because the novel allows more space for development than the short story. Hence, much more emphasis is given to describing the normal routine of Felipe's mundane existence before he enters the house. It is emphasized, for example, in the detailed presentation of Felipe's everyday activities, such as riding the bus, finding his busfare, reading the newspaper, smoking a cigarette, having a cup of tea, leaving a tip (pp. 9-10). Moreover, even after Felipe has answered Consuelo's advertisement in the paper, has accepted the position offered, and moved into the house, he continues to be portrayed in the most routine of daily activities at the same time as he is becoming the unwitting accomplice to Consuelo's strange behaviour. The detailed references to when Felipe smokes a cigarette, when he eats breakfast, lunch and dinner, when he looks at his watch, when he dresses and undresses, when he sleeps, and when he wakes up constitute the basis of the action narrated in all five chapters of the novel.

Although Felipe is fully aware of an atmosphere of antiquity and mystery from the moment he enters the house, it is not until the final moment of the last chapter of the novel that he capitulates and accepts the situation surrounding him. However, his acceptance, and the reader's, is not sudden, but is subject to a slow and sometimes almost imperceptible development. Although Felipe is aware of strange circumstances in the house and witnesses several unexplained incidents, he manages to maintain a certain distance from the abnormalities he notices and he tries to ignore them. When he notices for the second time, for example, that there is an extra place set at the dinner table, he does not ask for an explanation, but simply shrugs it off as another strange incident:

> Pero el cuarto cubierto también está puesto. Lo notas de pasada; ya no te preocupa. Si el precio de tu futura libertad creadora es aceptar todas las manías de esta anciana, puedes pagarlo sin dificultad. (p. 32)

However, in spite of himself, Felipe gradually becomes involved, to the extent that he begins to doubt himself. Aura's beautiful green eyes have a strange effect on him:

> Al fin, podrás ver esos ojos de mar que fluyen, se hacen espuma, vuelven a la calma verde, vuelven a inflamarse como una ola: tú los ves y te repites que no es cierto, que son unos hermosos ojos verdes idénticos a todos los hermosos ojos verdes que has conocido. (p. 18)

Not only does Felipe notice a change in himself, but he also tries to find an easy explanation for it:

> . . . al fin levanta la mirada y tú vuelves a dudar de tus sentidos, atribuyes al vino el aturdimiento, el mareo que te producen esos ojos verdes. (p. 24)
>
> Dudas, al caer sobre la butaca, si en realidad has visto eso; quizás sólo

> uniste esa imagen a los maullidos espantosos que persisten, disminuyen, al cabo terminan. (p. 29)

In spite of his efforts to remind himself of the routine, everyday reality which had been maintained through such activities as checking the time and attending to his basic daily needs, Felipe becomes more and more involved in Consuelo's mysterious way of life. Once he is convinced that Aura is kept in the house as a prisoner of Consuelo, against her will, in order to perpetuate the old woman's illusions of youth and beauty, Felipe decides to save Aura. Eventually, therefore, he becomes more intimately involved with her. On the fifth and final day of the story, his fourth day in the house, he awakes in Aura's bed and senses immediately that something catastrophic has taken place. His interpretation is that some other half of himself has been created through his contact with Aura:

> Te llevas las manos a las sienes, tratando de calmar tus sentidos en desarreglo: esa tristeza vencida te insinúa, en voz baja, en el recuerdo inasible de la premonición, que buscas tu otra mitad, que la concepción estéril de la noche pasada engendró tu propio doble. (p. 49)

This is the final step in the gradual absorption of Felipe's "real" world by the "unreal" one of Aura and Consuelo. They have, in fact, managed to re-create

General Llorente in Felipe. Felipe, however, is not yet aware of this and continues to struggle against the forces of the unreal. Only when he comes to the end of the General's memoirs does he realize that Consuelo is insane and has created Aura, and, only then, does he see himself in the portrait of the General. At that point, Felipe knows that he is lost. He has been overwhelmed by another reality, but has also been overwhelmed by the past. The past of the General and Consuelo have finally totally eclipsed the present of both Felipe and Consuelo. The young Felipe and the old Consuelo become the young couple that lived almost one hundred years before. For the reader, Aura has come to be as real as Consuelo and it is her image that remains, more than that of the "real" Felipe or the "real" Consuelo. Consuelo's past has thus eclipsed her unattractive present.

The underlying confusion of different times and realities in Aura has a profound impact on the apparently clearcut structure of the novel. What appears on the surface to be a direct, objective time structure, in which the action is developed over a period of five days, is contradicted by a different sense of time implied by the content of the novel. Time acquires more subjective than objective connotations and, in effect, Felipe's discovery, at the end of the novel, that time by the clock has become invalid for him is equally true for the novel itself. The way in which the past completely usurps the position of the present by the end of the story invalidates the apparently objective structure of the novel and the objective perception of time. From this point of view, therefore, the overall time structure of Aura is even more subjective than those early novels of Fuentes in which the present is fragmented by the interruption of the past.

In La región más transparente, it is the presence of Ixca Cienfuegos and the widow Teódula Moctezuma that contributes principally to the creation of a similar atmosphere in which a distinction between the past and present and between the real and unreal is blurred. The character created in the figure of Ixca Cienfuegos is itself symbolic of the fusion of past and present, and combines not only the mythical Indian traditions but also the history of Mexico since the Conquest. His name, composed of an indigenous first name and a family name of Spanish origin, embodies the cross of two civilizations and philosophies in Mexico. Moreover, Ixca is the character through whose eyes the entire action of the novel, which integrates the past and the present, is seen. The three-page, prefatory passage to the novel (pp. 19-21), of which he is the narrator, and the epilogue of sixteen pages (pp. 454-470) are the primary examples of the fusion of past and present. In the preface, referring to some of the most essential characteristics of man's existence in Mexico, Ixca invokes the mythical and historical past of the country and, indirectly, compares them with the contemporary situation. The final part of the preface includes a sentence of some twenty-three lines in which Mexico City is described in terms of an enumeration of all its essential qualities encompassing references both to its literal history and the symbols of its character. The epilogue, consisting of a single sentence, is an endeavour to capture the essence of Mexico as a whole. It is based on an enumeration of the heroes and anti-heroes of the atavistic, Aztec and Mayan past, of the colonial past, and of more recent history, and presents a review of the most significant social, political and economic conditions that have affected its development. A similar endeavour to provide an overall view of Mexico is also to be found in the novel, and, on this occasion, Cienfuegos serves as the necessary vehicle of expression. Looking out on to Avenida Juárez from Robles' office, he envisages the current state of Mexico, represented by the people he sees on the street, as a summation of its total history:

> Desde los vidrios azulados de la oficina de Federico Robles, Ixca Cienfuegos recorre con la mirada la extensión de la Avenida Juárez. Ve, sobre todo, a los hombres y las mjueres de todos los días . . . y quiere desnudarlos sobre los días que señalan el recuerdo de la misma avenida, con otros hombres, pero con los mismos ojos duales, presentes en el origen y en el destino, alineados o mezclados en turba. (p. 268)

The character of Teódula Moctezuma is also a synthesis of the mythical past and the present of Mexico. As with Ixca Cienfuegos, Teódula's name is symbolic of the merging of the Spanish and Indian civilizations, Teódula being of Spanish origin and Moctezuma of Indian origin. She continues to practise the sacrifices and rites of centuries past, as if she were indeed living at that time. Her entire way of life perpetuates that of the Aztecs of pre-Columbian times, as if no changes had taken place since then. Not only is she psychologically attuned to the past, but she is, as it were, able to make the past return in the present and thus combine the two times:

> La viuda observó a Ixca con una mirada lejana, de incomprensión total. Anclada en un día y un año que habían desaparecido hacía siglos, que nada tenían que ver con

> el momento ineludible de ese día, de ese año. (p. 341)
>
> . . . Teódula abrió los ojos, . . . y dijo con una voz que jamás se escuchó, que de haber resonado sólo pudo hacerlo en un tiempo muerto y olvidado, sepultado en agua y cenizas y caracolas y piel de tambor, una voz de escamas más que de palabras: --Nos acercamos a la división de las aguas. Ellos morirán y nosotros resucitaremos al alimentar. (p. 343)

In like manner, pages 209-215 describe how Teódula, with the help of Cienfuegos, performs an ancient rite in which the skulls of her dead husband and children are dug up and worshipped. Similarly, the death of Norma Larragoiti de Robles by fire is understood by Teódula and Cienfuegos to be a sacrifice to the dead and to the gods who must be satisfied. In addition, other characters, such as Robles and Rodrigo Pola, who are considered to have betrayed their past are also pursued.

Notwithstanding the presence of Ixca Cienfuegos and Teódula Moctezuma, and the influence that they exert on the events and characters described in the novel, the past has a role in La región más transparente different from that given to it in Aura and the stories of Los días enmascarados. In La región más transparente, the past does not gradually usurp the position of the present, but is portrayed as a force that constantly exists alongside it. The recurrence of the past in the present is therefore not so much the result of a particular process of events as it is the product of a prevailing situation. As a result, the narrative does not trace a gradual development in which the present is replaced by the past. What occurs is that each of the characters is forced to recognize the existence of the past and to accept it, not as something which can be forgotten but as a force that continually lurks beneath the surface of the present. Moreover, the element of the supernatural is missing. It is evident, for example, that Teódula practises her mythical rites as part of her own everyday existence.

To the extent that they represent neither the past nor the present exclusively, and in the light of the manner in which different times are blended in them, the elements of La región más transparente to which we have referred thus far can be said to convey a sense of timelessness. Because of their underlying meaning, they cannot be categorized without reservation as part of the chronological continuity of the fictive present or the fictive past. Indeed, because of the implication that the past is combined with the present, they may be considered to be particularly "time-laden". They disturb the neat, chronological continuity of the fictive present and therefore substantially affect the total impression of the temporal structure of the novel. The time covered by the work is stretched immeasurably to include a mythical period when time itself was measured in different terms. As a result, the breadth of the work is expanded and acquires added depth of meaning.

A very similar effect is achieved in *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* through recourse to the second person narrative voice, whose function, if only because of its many-faceted nature, is somewhat more difficult to pinpoint than the usages to which we have already referred. In an earlier chapter, we have already discussed the use of the second person narrative to complete the description of the action of the fictive present, left incomplete as a result of the semi-conscious or unconscious state of the first person narrator. In this regard, the second person narrator represents the subconscious voice of the protagonist, which assumes the narrative when he loses consciousness or falls asleep. It may also act as his conscience or alter ego, make observations, pass judgement and generally assume a didactic and moralizing tone. In another sense, however, and much in the manner of Ixca Cienfuegos, the second person voice represents and combines the past and the present, as well as referring to the future. As with Cienfuegos, it oversees all the present and past action of the novel and regresses, not only through recorded history, but to the mythical, atavistic past. Thus it refers with equal freedom to the moment of the conquest of Mexico, of which Artemio Cruz is himself a symbol (pp. 35-36), and to the mythical journey of universal man from his very beginnings to the present:

> Aprenderás a frotar dos maderos hasta incendiarlos porque necesitarás arrojar una tea a la entrada de tu cueva y espantar a las bestias que no te distinguirán, que no diferenciarán tu carne de la carne de otras bestias y tendrás que construir mil templos, dictar mil leyes, escribir mil libros, adorar mil dioses, pintar mil cuadros; fabricar mil máquinas, dominar mil pueblos, romper mil átomos. (p. 207)

The second person narrator, moreover, has the capability of seeing the past in the present and the present in the past, as well as their future implications. He refers to the immediate future within the novel itself, in the sense that he generally forecasts what is to be remembered by Artemio Cruz in the third person narrative segments that always follow the sections spoken by the second person narrator. He also refers to Artemio's imminent death. Furthermore, the majority of the second person narrative, whether referring to the past, present, or future, employs the future tense. This unusual narrative technique results in considerable temporal confusion and in an apparent contradiction, particularly when past and future are combined as in the phrase "ayer volarás" in the following passage:

> Sólo quisieras recordar, recostado allí, en la penumbra de tu recámara, lo que va a suceder: no quieres prever lo que ya sucedió. En tu penumbra, los ojos ven hacia adelante; no saben adivinar el pasado. Sí; ayer volarás desde Hermosillo, ayer nueve de abril de 1959, en el vuelo regular de la Compañía Mexicana de Aviación que saldrá de la capital de Sonora, donde hará un calor infernal. (p. 13)

On one level, the use of the future tense need not be seen as particularly startling, since it does refer to the immediate future in the text. That is to say, that since, in the majority of cases, it refers to the past which will be repeated in Artemio Cruz's mind, it might be thought of as an acceptable, if unusual usage. There are several instances, however, in which it does not refer to what follows immediately in the text. It is employed to give a sense of imminence, of impending doom, to the entire action described and appears to direct Artemio Cruz himself. This conclusion is in keeping with the function attributed by Fuentes to the second person voice:

> . . . el subconsciente, especie de Virgilio

> que lo guía por los doce círculos de su infierno y que es la otra cara de su espejo, la otra mitad de Artemio Cruz: es el "Tú" que habla en futuro. Es el subconsciente que se aferra a un porvenir que el "yo" --el viejo moribundo-- no alcanzará a conocer.[5]

The use of the second person voice and the future tense in La muerte de Artemio Cruz is reminiscent of a similar usage in Aura, but there is a substantial difference. Unlike La muerte de Artemio Cruz, in Aura the future tense never refers to the past but to the present, and occasionally to the future.[6] For this reason, once the reader of Aura becomes accustomed to the usage, there is in fact little temporal confusion as a result of employment of the future tense.

In company with La región más transparente, La muerte de Artemio Cruz differs substantially from the works previously discussed in this section of our chapter in that the usurpation of the present by the past is not at issue. In both novels, the past is portrayed as co-existing with the present. Thus, in La muerte de Artemio Cruz, the second person narrator does not view a separate present and past, one of which gradually replaces the other. On the contrary, he presents a situation in which the two coexist at all times.

The time structure of La muerte de Artemio Cruz is complicated and enriched appreciably by this second person narrative voice in which past, present and future are fused to a degree even greater than in *La región más transparente*, in which the effect is principally obtained by the presence of Ixca Cienfuegos. This is particularly because of the regularity with which the second person narrative voice occurs, and its constant reference to the mythical past of Mexico and of man in general. Armand F. Baker, who sees it as a "supra-consciousness", comments,

> Parece ser la voz de la conciencia colectiva del país, o más aun, la conciencia universal de la raza entera, a la cual pertenecen todos los hombres de todos los tiempos.[7]

The time span of the novel may therefore be thought of as occupying a great deal more than the twelve hours of Artemio's agony, or even the seventy-one years of his life. In a sense, it covers Mexican and Spanish recorded history up to the conquest of Mexico, and the existence of man since the beginning of time. Moreover, the regularity with which the continuity of the fictive present is interrupted by this supra-consciousness covering all time severely affects any absolute sense of objectivity in the measurement of time. In fact, it sets the whole scheme of the novel within a subjective time frame.

The recurrence of the past in the present and the resulting fusion of the two times, as described above, clearly indicate that the past and present cannot be entirely segregated, and that the notion of present time does not entail totally abandoning the past. Given this situation, it also seems obvious that time, as represented in Fuentes' works, cannot be seen only in terms of its linear development. Since the past reappears, the present may be seen as its repetition as well as its continuation. In this sense, the forward movement of time, progress and change are little more than a constant regression to the past which gives the advancement of time the character of a cyclical pattern. Basically, the notion of cyclical time also entails the meeting of past and present. It implies that an action finishes at a point which corresponds to the one where it began and, therefore, that in spite of the passage of time, there has been no real or radical change. At the same time, it suggests that time progresses in accordance with certain patterns that are continually repeated, whether they are shorter patterns corresponding to hours, days or weeks, or longer ones, such as years, the span of a human life, or centuries.

In our discussion of the fictive present in Fuentes' works, it was concluded that in spite of the predominance of a linear chronology evident in the development in the majority of the narratives, there was a marked tendency to portray time in terms of a cyclical movement. The impression that a cyclical notion of time is of paramount importance to Fuentes' works is that much more evident when each of them is examined in its entirety, taking into account both the fictive past and the fictive present and what we have now described as the fusion of past and present. It then becomes clear that all of Fuentes' early works possess a cyclical structure which, although occasionally less obvious in the formal sense, nonetheless superimposes itself on all other structures. Such a structure is apparent principally as a result of three aspects of the texts: certain characteristics created as a consequence of the disposition of the texts themselves; the specific representation of time as a cyclical phenomenon and the description of human actions within that context; and certain characteristics of the thematic content of the works.

By textual disposition, we refer to the way in which portions of the narrative may be ordered in such a manner as to oblige the reader to see a cyclical form represented in the work. In some instances it may be that the reader is made to relate the beginning and the end of the work and thus to see the narrative as a whole as transcribing a completed circle. In other instances, certain structures within the narrative itself oblige the reader to think in terms of the cyclical connotations of time.

La región más transparente provides one of the most obvious examples of a disposition which affects the entire text by bringing its beginning and end together. As we have previously indicated, the novel begins and ends with similar kinds of passages which do not belong to the sequential chronology of either the fictive past or the fictive present, but which emphasize the cyclical aspects of life in general. These passages indicate Ixca Cienfuegos' ability to see the reflection of Mexico's past in its present and to understand the significance of the meeting of the past and the present. In both passages, also, a certain sense of fatalism is expressed, implicit in the idea of a cyclical return. Thus the phrases repeated at the end of both passages not only reflect this fatalism but, because of their repetition, also serve to consolidate the link between the beginning and the end of the novel: "Aquí nos tocó. Qué le vamos a hacer. En la región más transparente del aire". (pp. 21 and 470). The repetition of these phrases, together with the fact that both passages contain the same basic theme, indicates that, in spite of the 449 pages of text between them, and in spite of the progression of time in the fictive present, we have not advanced beyond the point of departure of the novel when we reach its final pages. The entire narrative is therefore enclosed in a circle, represented by the prologue and the epilogue, which entail no movement in time.

The structure underlying Las buenas conciencias is also cyclical. In fact, the link between the beginning and the end of the text is even more obvious than in La región más transparente, since it is brought about by the repetition of an entire paragraph describing Jaime's actions:

> Caminó de regreso a la casa de los antepasados. Había salido la luna, y Guanajuato le devolvía un reflejo violento desde las cúpulas y las rejas y los empedrados. La mansión de cantera de la familia Ceballos abría su gran zaguán verde para recibir a Jaime. (pp. 9-10 and 190-191)

If Jaime is seen performing exactly the same actions at the end of the novel as at the beginning, it is even more evident that time has not progressed, at least not in the fictive present. Unlike La región más transparente, the link between the beginning and end in Las buenas conciencias serves precisely to indicate that there has been no movement in time in the fictive present. A circle is created through the connection between the beginning and the end of the text, and by the fact that the story is told by taking its end as a point of departure and by gradually returning to the same point through a recuperation of the past.

A similar structure is evident in "Chac Mool", in which the story begins not at the end but near the end, and then consists in a recuperation of the past. That is to say, that Filiberto's death is mentioned at the very beginning of the text and that his story is then narrated only to return to the point where he leaves for Acapulco and subsequently dies. The fact that Filiberto's death itself is not the end of the story as such means that, in fact, an absolute circle is not created through the textual disposition of the narrative. The general effect, however, is very similar to that experienced in Las buenas conciencias because it does involve the major portion of the narrative.

In addition to these broad structures affecting the form of the entire text, there are other, internal structures in Fuentes' works which create a sense of cyclical time. In La muerte de Artemio Cruz, for example, a cyclical structure is evident in the constantly recurring pattern of the narrative constructed on a triad of narrative voices, the first, second and third persons singular. A cyclical sense of time, moreover, is evident in the sequence of each triad, in that each narrative voice represents a specific time, the present, future and past respectively. Each triad is therefore a composite of two integrated cycles, deriving from the different times and narrative voices, and is, in turn, part of a larger cycle made up of the succession of triads that constitutes the novel as a whole. Although less evenly than in *La muerte de Artemio Cruz*, a similar effect is created in *La región más transparente*, as a result of the changes from one time period to another, in a relatively rhythmical manner. The impression of a cyclical movement is further obtained in *La región más transparente* by the rhythmical effect arising from the depiction of simultaneous actions in Part I and the regular interpolation of the vignettes of Part II.

In some of Fuentes' early works, a cyclical sense of time is also conveyed through textual repetition. Already discussed with reference to the passages occurring at the beginning and end of *La región más transparente* and of *Las buenas conciencias*, repetition is also an important characteristic of *La muerte de Artemio Cruz*. In the first person narrative segments in particular, but also in the second person segments and, to some extent, throughout the novel as a whole, the constant repetition of phrases, snatches of conversation and the actions of characters, does much to emphasize the cyclical nature of the novel. As noted above, in Chapter I, in spite of some indications of progress in the fictive present, the actions described in the first person narratives are continually repeated. The repetition generally appears to be a result of the thought processes of Artemio Cruz, to the extent that in the segments corresponding to the first person narrative voice it is often difficult to determine which actions are in fact repeated and which are merely undergoing repetition in the character's mind. Whatever the situation, however, the reader has the feeling of continually finding himself returned to a point which he thought he had long passed. Thus, as a result of the constant repetition, the narrative appears to progress in accordance with a series of cyclical movements.

A sense of cyclical time is also produced in Fuentes' early works as a result of the way in which time itself is described and used to create a context in which the actions of characters are placed. In some instances, an entire narrative unfolds in the context of a particular period of time that reflects a cycle of human history. Such is the case of the last story of Los días enmascarados, "El que inventó la pólvora", for example, in which man is depicted as returning to his beginnings on earth. After passing through a series of stages indicative of the development of society, the narrator is depicted as having regressed to the very point of man's origin:

> Estoy sentado en una playa que antes --si recuerdo algo de geografía-- no bañaba mar alguno. No hay más muebles en el universo que dos estrellas, las olas y arena. He tomado unas ramas secas; las froto, durante mucho tiempo . . . ah, la primera chispa. . . . (pp. 96-97)

In comparison with this short story, Las buenas conciencias presents a series of events that portrays a cycle of approximately one hundred years of history, encompassing four shorter cycles, each representing one of the four generations of Jaime Ceballos' family that have lived in Guanajuato. The content of La región más transparente has similar cyclical connotations. Although the majority of its narrative is devoted to the detailed portrayal of a single generation represented principally by Federico Robles, two more generations are also depicted. In the sections dealing with the past, the lives of the predecessors of several characters are sketched, if only briefly in some cases. This is precisely the case of the forebears of Rodrigo Pola and Pimpinela de Ovando. Moreover, Part III of the novel contains the emergence of a new generation, represented by Jaime Ceballos and by Betina Régules, the daughter of Roberto Régules. Unlike Las buenas conciencias and La región más transparente, La muerte de Artemio Cruz is only concerned with the life cycle of a single man. Perhaps the most obvious indicator of this cycle is the fact that the two most significant events in Artemio's life, his birth and his death, are narrated at the same point, at the end of the novel. That is to say, Artemio's life cycle, narrated in the course of the novel, is completed at its end: he rediscovers his origin and meets his final destiny at the same point.

In addition to the use of an entire narrative to depict complete cycles of time, there is also a marked tendency in Fuentes' early works to describe the progress of time in terms of shorter natural cycles and to place the actions of the characters within this context. In Las buenas conciencias, for example, the adolescence of Jaime is presented as part of the cycle of his growth from youth to manhood, and the narrative is based on cyclical landmarks, such as his birthdays, the liturgical calendar and the seasons of the year. His birthdays are, on occasions, mentioned at the beginning and end of a chapter, so that the chapter itself is representative of a yearly cycle. Such is the case of Chapters V and VI, in which Jaime's fifteenth and sixteenth years are described. In this novel, too, there is a general tendency to begin chapters with a reference to the morning and to end them with a reference to the end of the day. Chapters VII, VIII, IX and X, for instance, have this characteristic.

In fact, the 24-hour cycle, or a significant fraction of it, is exploited as the basis of a number of Fuentes' early narratives. In two of the stories of _Los días enmascarados_, "Chac Mool" and "Por boca de los dioses", the action described in the narrative is placed in the context of a single day. In the case of "Chac Mool", the period of time in question is an approximately 24-hour period, pertaining to the narrative of the recent past. Within this period, which embraces the narrator's journey between Acapulco and Mexico City, is interpolated a further cycle of events, namely that corresponding to the more remote past represented by the events involving Filiberto. In this regard, _La muerte de Artemio Cruz_ has certain similarities with "Chac Mool". The fictive present of the novel covers a period of approximately twelve hours, beginning in the morning and ending at night. Even though an entire 24-hour cycle is not encompassed, the emphasis on movement from the morning to the night conveys a sense of completion of a cycle. Moreover, the sequence of events belonging to the fictive present, moving from morning to night, from light to dark, contains the narration of a life cycle, from the birth to the death of Artemio Cruz. Such a procedure is reflected in the form of the narrative also, in that the narration of Artemio's life in the second and third person sections of the novel is placed within the framework of the first person sections, in which his hours of death are detailed. In turn, the span of his life-time is placed within the broader cycles of history, in that it is representative of the pre-revolutionary and revolutionary periods in Mexico. Thus the content of La muerte de Artemio Cruz presents us with a series of carefully integrated cycles of varying dimensions and meaning.

In addition to the narratives which unfold entirely within the context of the passage of a day or part of a day, there are others in which the daily cycle is emphasized as a means of conveying the notion of the passage of time. In La región más transparente, as we have already indicated, some attention is given to portraying the occurrence of events in the terms of a series of cycles. This procedure forms the basis of the passage of time conveyed in Part I and in much of Part II of the novel, and lends a cyclical pattern to the narrative as a whole. It indicates the author's interest in conveying a notion of time measured according to the repetition of its basic cycles. Thus, in Part II, the reader will find more references to the day of the week, to the sunrise or sunset, to the morning or the night, than to the date or specific hour of the day, in order to draw more attention to the recording of time according to the most significant moments of its cyclical progress.

This type of construction of a narrative on the basis of cyclical time is more developed in Aura than in any other part of Fuentes' early fiction, although it must be noted that the rudiments of such a technique already appeared in "Tlactocatzine, del jardín de Flandes", in which an indication of the passage of time is related to the use of a diary as a source of the narrative. In Aura, the five chapters, which loosely correspond to the five days that elapse during the story, provide a basis for the cyclical representation of time. In each case, the events recorded begin in the morning of a new day and end in the evening. Felipe is thereby shown to be completing a daily cycle, renewed each day, completed each night. From Chapters II to V, the daily cycle is synchronized with the division of the text into chapters. Chapters

I and II are somewhat different, but only because Chapter I describes the beginning and end of the first day, and the beginning of a second, while Chapter II details the events of the second day, which is not ended till the first paragraph of Chapter III. Thus, although a strict chronological order is preserved, the narrative is fragmented into a series of repetitive cycles in which the morning and the night (as the beginning and the end) are emphasized. One of the best examples of this routine repetition is the continued reference to mealtimes and other daily activities attended to by Felipe. Attention is therefore diverted from the linear, chronological development of the narrative to the routine repetition of actions, which has the effect of emphasizing the cyclical movement of time.

The final form in which a sense of cyclical time is evident in Fuentes' early works pertains more to their content than to their structure, although it does have some impact on the general structure of the narratives and cannot really be separated from structural concerns. That is to say, that certain aspects of the thematic content of Fuentes' fiction develop the notion that everything may be seen in cyclical terms, such as in the cycles of life, political or generational cycles, which oblige the reader to see time itself as cyclical and lead to the conclusion that human history always repeats itself according to certain fundamental patterns.

The cycles of life and society traced in Fuentes' fiction, whether through a complete life-span in the case of Artemio Cruz, the adolescence of Jaime Ceballos, or just significant episodes in the lives of some of the characters of La región más transparente, are consistently presented as if they were compounded of incidents that do little more than repeat what has gone before in another form. The idea that social progress in reality consists of a constant renewal of the same familiar patterns, without any radical change having taken place in the social order, is clearly expressed by Pimpinela de Ovando in La región más transparente:

> Recuerdo que mi abuelita decía que igual que la aristocracia porfiriana vio con horror la entrada a México de los Villas y los Zapatos, ella y las viejas familias vieron entrar a Díaz y a los suyos el siglo pasado. Entonces las gentes decentes eran lerdistas. Aunque también ellos se habían hecho ricos con los bienes del clero. (pp. 155-156)

It is precisely the same idea that the life of Artemio Cruz is intended to illustrate. As Gamaliel Bernal points out, the rise of Artemio Cruz in the aftermath of the Revolution is not indicative of change, but of the cyclical repetition of the same order:

> Artemio Cruz. Así se llamaba, entonces, el nuevo mundo surgido de la guerra civil; así se llamaban quienes llegaban a sustituirlo. Desventurado país . . . desventurado país qua a cada generación tiene que destruir a los antiguos poseedores y sustituirlos por nuevos amos, tan rapaces y ambiciosos como los anteriores. (p. 50)

Indeed, the course of political life in Mexico is portrayed as a continuing series of such periodic readjustments intended to preserve the status quo. The fifth segment of the third person narrative in La muerte de Artemio Cruz, for instance (pp. 125-138), deals with the recurring situation of Mexican politics, whereby, with each presidential election, the upper and middle classes must adjust their allegiances and opinions in order to preserve their social and economic position. The same point is made, with equal eloquence, in Las buenas conciencias:

> ¿No debían los Ceballos su fortuna y posición a la buena voluntad de los gobernadores Muñoz Ledo y Antillón? ¿No habían incrementado una y afirmado otra, merced a la del general Díaz? ¿Por qué, ahora, habían de enajenarse la del general Calles? O la del general Cárdenas, cuando demostró que no sería un pelele. O, por fin, la del general Avila Camacho, durante cuya presidencia Jorge Balcárcel se permitió el lujo de sincronizar sus creencias privadas con sus declaraciones públicas. (p. 38)

One of the fundamental themes of both La región más transparente and Las buenas conciencias is the idea that the same pattern of behaviour and the same social structures are preserved from generation to generation. As we have already indicated in an earlier context, after the downfall and elimination of several members of the older generation in La región más transparente, the social structure remains intact and is perpetuated by members of the younger generation, whose ascendancy is confirmed in Part III of the novel. Thus, the process which had been portrayed in Part I and Part II is begun again. Jaime Ceballos, in Las buenas conciencias, is but another reflection of the same process. In spite of himself, he will live according to the patterns long since established by his ancestors. He cannot break the cycle, but only continue it by repeating the past. For him, as for the other characters portrayed in Fuentes' early fiction, the past and the present appear to be virtually synonymous, bound together by the recurrence of events in the course of a seemingly never-ending cycle.

NOTES

[1] Alejo Carpentier, "De lo real maravilloso americano", in Tientos y diferencias (Montevideo, 1971), p. 132. This article first appeared as part of the prologue of Carpentier's El reino de este mundo in 1949.

[2] Luis Leal, "El realismo mágico en la literatura hispanoamericana", Cuadernos Americanos, No. 4, CLIII (julio-agosto, 1967), pp. 232-233 and 234.

[3] Although very similar to the other stories in its representation of a sense of magical realism, "Letanía de orquídea" does not present a fusion of the past and present. In fact it is one of the few works of Fuentes' early fiction in which the past in any form is almost entirely absent.

[4] For identification of these mythological figures, see C.A. Burland, The Gods of Mexico (New York, 1967).

[5] Emmanuel Carballo, "Conversación con Carlos Fuentes", "La Cultura en México", núm. 14, Suplemento de Siempre (23 mayo, 1962), p. vi.

[6] On the first page, for example, "Tú releerás", in contrast to the present tense employed to describe

the entire action of the first two pages, refers to an immediate future.

[7] Armand F. Baker, "El tiempo en la novela hispanoamericana", Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation (University of Iowa, 1967), p. 336.

CHAPTER IV

TIME AS THEME AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR STRUCTURE

The most significant elements of time and structure in Fuentes' early fiction have been found to be the following: a multiplicity of time lines representing the fictive present and different levels of the fictive past; extreme fragmentation and chronological dislocation of the narrative, resulting both from the interweaving of the many time lines and from the use of different narrative voices; de-emphasis of the fictive present as a result of devoting the majority of the narrative to the fictive past; emphasis on a subjective sense of time developed in conjunction with an objective narration of events, as is evident from the recourse to mind time in memory sequences and interior monologues; a blurring of the conventional distinction between past, present and future; and, finally, the imposition of a cyclical pattern over the linear pattern that is implied by the narration of events in the context of an objective time frame. Although soundly developed and coherently incorporated into the narrative, these elements are not merely the product of gratuitous technical experimentation, but are intrinsically related to, and largely a function of, the thematic content of the novels and short stories. That is to say, that beyond the purely formal elements of Fuentes' works, the substance of his narratives is itself an appreciable factor that must be taken into account in evaluating his approach to questions associated with time. Thus, in this chapter, we shall examine the major ideas on time expressed in Fuentes' early fiction in order to establish how they are related and have influenced the time structure of his work during that part of his literary career with which we are concerned.

Although there is little that could be described as a metaphysical debate on the abstract nature of time or the historical development of time as a concept, many aspects of time are dealt with in the four novels and five short stories discussed in this study. In general, however, time is treated in a rather pragmatic way, in terms of its effects on man, how he understands it, how it forms part of his existence, and how he deals with it. Such preoccupations are placed within the particular context of Mexico, in an attempt to arrive at an understanding of its past and its present, and, to some extent, to predict its future. In the light of these general concerns, we shall discuss the principal thematic aspects of time under the following three headings: the inevitable past, destiny and myth, which from our point of view, provide us with categories appropriate to cover the greater part of Fuentes' treatment of the subject.

The Inevitable Past

The past in Fuentes' fiction has been justly referred to as "inescapable",[1] for in reading Fuentes it is truly impossible to avoid an encounter with the past in one form or another. The reader discovers it in various guises: in the environments of antiquity described in some parts of the works; in the reference to traditions and history; in the recourse to the myths and legends of the Aztecs and Mayas; and in the narration of the personal and ancestral past of the fictional characters. By the same token, the past is just as unavoidable for these characters as it is for Fuentes' readers, since they must inevitably confront it and deal with it at some point in their lives.

The reader of Fuentes' early fiction soon becomes accustomed to the environments of antiquity created as a means of providing a descriptive context conducive to the evocation of the past. Fuentes' purpose is to create an atmosphere in which an encounter with the past appears inevitable, not only for the reader, but also for the characters situated in these contexts. In some instances, an environment conducive to a particular, and perhaps momentary, evocation of the past is described as required in the course of a narrative. In others, however, it is evident that the reader is intended to place an entire narrative in such a context. La región más transparente, for example, provides one of the clearest uses of the description of an all-encompassing environment from which the past will emerge. In the two and a half page preface to the novel, Ixca Cienfuegos's invocation of the historical and mythical past of Mexico, pronounced as he surveys the present condition of Mexico City, is evidently intended to set the tone for the entire narrative that follows. The reader is thus prepared for the subsequent narrative in which the personal, ancestral, historical and legendary past are re-presented. By the same token, because Cienfuegos' monologue focuses on the city of Mexico, the reader is also prepared to accept that the city will not only be the scenario, but will, in a sense, constitute the central "character" of the novel. The reader is reminded of both these factors at the end of the novel, in the 16-page epilogue (pp. 454-470), which is also attributed to Cienfuegos ("la voz de Ixca Cienfuegos", p. 454), even if he is not the narrator. In this passage, Mexico's past is evoked in its entirety, from its recent past, represented by the content of the novel itself, to the more remote mythical past. The content of the novel is thus framed within two texts whose major function seems to be to place the narrative of a present time in the total context of the past.

In Las buenas conciencias, a similar kind of environment is also created by enclosing the content of the novel between two passages evocative of the past. The italicized pages at the start of the novel (pp. 9-10) not only portray Jaime Ceballos as he begins to recall the past, but also indicate that his memory will reach far beyond his own time to a more remote past:

> Ahora Jaime Ceballos repetía su nombre en voz baja. Ceballos. ¿Por qué se llamaba así? ¿Quiénes, y para qué, se habían llamado así antes que él? Eran esos fantasmas amarillos, encorsetados, rígidos, que su padre había colgado en las paredes de la alcoba antes de morir. Los Ceballos de Guanajuato. Gente decente. Buenos católicos. Caballeros. No eran fantasmas. Los traía metidos adentro, de buena o mala gana. A los trece años, jugaba todavía en la vieja carroza sin ruedas que la familia conservaba en la caballeriza empolvada. Pero no . . . primero debía recordarlos tal come se reflejaban desde las paredes de su padre, en los daguerrotipos desteñidos. (p. 9)

As an indication that the atmosphere created in this introductory passage pervades the entire novel, its final paragraph is repeated at the end:

> Caminó de regreso a la casa de los antepasados. Había salido la luna, y Guanajuato le devolvía un reflejo violento desde las cúpulas y las rejas y los empedrados. La mansión de cantera de la familia Ceballos abría su gran zaguán verde para recibir a Jaime. (pp. 9-10 and 190-191)

The preliminary italicized passage also introduces a second important element in the creation of an environment evocative of the past: the description of Jaime's ancestral home:

> La casa, húmeda y sombría. Casa de puertas y ventanas que la muerte, el olvido o la simple falta de acontecimientos iban cerrando, una a una. La casa de los escasos momentos de su adolescencia. El hogar donde quiso ser cristiano. La casa y la familia. (p. 9)

Although begun in the introductory pages, and therefore established as a significant element of Jaime's environment, this description is elaborated much further in Chapter I, which is devoted almost entirely to describing the house. The old dark mansion, heavily laden with dust, with its cellar full of cobwebs and old trunks of bric-à-brac collected from past generations, sets the scene for a story about people who live in, and are completely controlled by the past:

> Es lenta la vida de la casa, y hay algo ruinoso, más que en las viejas paredes, más que en las vigas húmedas, en el aire que durante las noches descansa y acumula el polvo entre los pliegues de las cortinas. Esta es la casa de los cortinajes. (p. 11)

Not only is the whole of Chapter I devoted to its description, but the house is also referred to with considerable frequency in subsequent chapters, notably on pages 23, 36, 67-68, 80, 83, 96-99, 138, 170-171, 183-185, 190-191. Throughout the novel, its large lugubrious rooms play an important role in Jaime's personal story. The house itself, and its contents, are a constant reminder of the kind of existence led not only by the characters portrayed in the novel, but by the inhabitants of Guanajuato in general. Thus Asunción, Jorge Balcárcel and Rodolfo Ceballos have continued to regulate their lives according to an old clock which had been brought to Guanajuato from Madrid one hundred years before, when the first Ceballos arrived in Mexico:

> A todas las recámaras llega el martilleo lejano del gran reloj de la sala: uno, dos, tres, hasta doce rumores metálicos que cada cual, en su cama, reproduce mentalmente en una danza de crinolinas y pelucas blancas: las doce figuras de porcelana que al sonar las horas abren las puertas de laca y hacen la ronda del viejo reloj, traído desde Madrid por el fundador Higinio Ceballos. Los habitantes saben que, en seguida, los campanarios nocturnos de Guanajuato

> reproducirán el aviso de la medianoche. El reloj de la casa, desde los tiempos de don Higinio, se adelanta tres minutos. ((pp. 96-97)

It makes little difference that, at this point in the novel, Jaime is out of step with the rest of the household and that his time is measured by more natural clocks:

> Sólo Jaime Ceballos piensa, al mismo tiempo, en el cuadrante de sol, velado por la luna, que marca un tiempo distinto en un rincón del patio húmedo. (p. 97)

He is nonetheless surrounded by the past in every sense, not only in the house and its contents, but by the members of his family who live in the past, in a sleepy provincial town where people continue to think as they have done for generations because nothing new takes place. In such an environment, Jaime cannot avoid reflecting on the past, nor can he help being eventually assimilated by it. The phrase with which the introductory passage is ended and which also closes the novel itself refers to the ancestral home and is symbolic of that final assimilation and surrender on Jaime's part: "La mansión de cantera de la familia Ceballos abría su gran zaguán verde para recibir a Jaime" (pp. 10 and 191). At the same time, the house is also symbolic of tradition and conformity and of those with the "good consciences". It not only represents the ancestral past, but also the historical past, since it has been the scene of many historical events: "Esta es la gran casa de cantera, habitada hasta el día de hoy por la familia. La historia de Guanajuato ha patinado sus muros de piedra rosa" (p. 11). As a symbol of the past, and a representation of the stifling existence of the provincial city of Guanajuato, the house has a suffocating effect on life.

In Las buenas conciencias, the old house is part of a total, all-encompassing environment, created primarily through the introductory and final paragraphs of the novel. The textual disposition of the novel itself therefore contributes to persuading the reader to think in terms of the past and, consequently, to accept the core of the narrative itself as a story placed exclusively in the context of the past. In three of Fuentes' other works, the description of an old house alone provides the fundamental context in which the narratives are placed. In "Chac Mool", for example, the house in which the reincarnation of the ancient Mayan god takes place is described by Filiberto as "este caserón grande, lúgubre en su arquitectura porfiriana, herencia y recuerdo de mis padres" (p. 16). It therefore constitutes an appropriate setting for the reappearance of the past. Moreover, Filiberto's comment about the house as a legacy may be seen as ambiguous, indicating, as the story reveals, that the house not only evokes his personal past, but in a more general sense, also that of his legendary ancestors, the Aztec and Mayan gods. In "Tlactocatzine, del jardín de Flandes", the house whose garden and rooms are haunted by the ghost of Carlota, is described as "esa vieja mansión del Puente de Alvarado, suntuosa pero inservible, construída en tiempos de la Intervención Francesa" (p. 37), and is a most suitable environment for the appearance of the ghost of the Emperor Maximilian's wife. The protagonist and narrator is himself so attracted to and overwhelmed by the Second Empire house that he takes the time to describe it in considerable detail, referring to it as an "island of antiquity":

> La mansión es en verdad hermosa, por más que la fachada se encargue de negarlo, con su exceso de capiteles jónicos y cariátides del Segundo Imperio. El salón, con vista a la calle, luce un piso oloroso y brillante, y las paredes, apenas manchadas por los rectángulos espectrales donde antes colgaban los cuadros, son de un azul tibio, anclado en lo antiguo, ajeno a lo puramente viejo. (p. 39)

As in "Chac Mool", the atmosphere created by the old house, rooted in the past, provides an appropriate setting for the unfolding of an action in which the past is relived. The narrator, and the reader, find themselves in an environment in which it is impossible to avoid an encounter with the past. In the context of the story, therefore, the old building becomes a symbol of the survival of the past in the present.

The description of an old house in Aura is the most important device employed to create atmosphere. It not only provides the scenario in which the recuperation of the past is depicted, but also conveys a sense of antiquity, mystery and unreality. In this instance, the house is described from both the exterior and the interior. The reader is told that, until he went there himself, Felipe believed it to be located on a street on which there were no residents. In fact, it is located in the old centre of the city, and has not changed with the times in spite of the fact that all the old palaces of this particular district have now been converted into shops:

> . . . allí nada cambia. Las sinfonolas no perturban, las luces de mercurio no iluminan, las baratijas expuestas no adornan ese segundo rostro de los edificios. Unidad de tezontle, los nichos con sus santos truncos coronados de palomas, la piedra labrada de barroco mexicano, los balcones de celosía, las troneras y los canales de lámina, las gárgolas de arenisca. Las ventanas ensombrecidas por largas cortinas verdosas. . . . (p. 11)

Inside, the house is dark and damp:

> . . . intentas penetrar la oscuridad de ese callejón techado --patio, porque puedes oler el musgo, la humedad de las plantas, las raíces podridas, el perfume adormecedor y espeso--. Buscas en vano una luz que te guíe. (p. 12)

> . . . tú sientes un frío húmedo. Todos los muros del salón están recubiertos de una madera oscura, labrada al estilo gótico, con ojivas y rosetones calados. (p. 22)

Moreover, the house in which the young historian Felipe Montero has been given the task of completing the memoirs of General Llorente is itself evocative of many memories. Thus, as in the two stories of *Los días enmascarados* discussed above, the atmosphere of antiquity which is created, in which the evocation of the past is inevitable, is appropriate to the theme treated. Felipe, like the reader, is enveloped by this environment. It not only provides a point of departure for the development of the narrative, but creates the essential context in which the past becomes animate, takes on life in the person of Aura, and draws Felipe into it. It therefore contributes to one of the points that Fuentes seems to emphasize in this novel, that the past is as alive as the present, and is able to usurp its position.

In other works by Fuentes, contexts evocative of the past are also based on the description of some type of dwelling. Although they appear somewhat more sporadically, they are no less effective than those instances already discussed. In "Por boca de los dioses", for example, the ancient gods of Mexico appear in the basement of a hotel. Although the hotel is modern, the fact that the gods are underground, in the underworld, so to speak, makes it a suitable location for their abode. Moreover, just as the Spaniards built their cities on the ruins of former civilizations, so it may be understood that the past lurks beneath the surface of the present. It is also appropriate that the number of Oliverio's room is 1519, a fact which evokes the date of Cortés' arrival in Mexico, for although the past is shown to coexist with the present, unlike the situation in some of the works previously discussed, it is not in harmony with it. In "Por boca de los dioses", the environment created is not only evocative of the past, but also indicative of conflict between the past and the present. The story itself begins with an argument between the youthful Oliverio and an old man, Don Diego, in which Don Diego takes the side of traditional painters and Oliverio that of the modern artists. The conflict ends with the death of Don Diego at the hands of Oliverio, which appears to indicate a victory for the present, until Oliverio is later killed by Tlazol, the goddess of luxury, which symbolizes a victory for the past.

In La región más transparente and La muerte de Artemio Cruz there are further examples of the creation of an environment so permeated by the past that the characters inhabiting it cannot avoid a confrontation with it. Such is the case of Lorenza de Ovando in La región más transparente. Although the old family mansion is gradually being converted to modern commercial establishments, she continues to surround herself with as many of the remnants of the former glory of her family as she possibly can:

> Y la casa de Hamburgo se fue fraccionando: primero, el jardín, para que construyeran unos libaneses sus apartamientos; luego la caballeriza, para unos abarrotes; por último, la fachada de la casa, los salones, la planta baja, para una tienda de modas. Cuatro piezas es todo lo que les quedaba . . . Doña Lorenza no quiso desprenderse de los muebles; amontonados en las recámaras, junto con las macetas de porcelana y vidrio y las mecedoras de mimbre, el olor guardado en los armarios de nogal, los pequeños cortesanos de porcelana con sus pelucas blancas, los camafeos y las cajas de música, las escenas bucólicas, la compresión tullida de su grandeza. Ya el sol no les llegaba . . . Pero en la recámara persistía el viejo mundo. Allí todo se conservaba, el pasado, y el futuro. (p. 97)

Since they constantly remind her of the past, these remnants of a more glorious age nourish Lorenza's nostalgia and, in a way, given that the present holds nothing for her, are the sole reason for her continued existence. She lives in the past. In this particular episode, entitled "Los de Ovando", as well as in that entitled "Pimpinela de Ovando" (pp. 289-301), and to a lesser extent in "Mercedes Zamacona" (p. 409-428), the past is seen as lost forever, never to be regained. For this reason, these segments of the novel are pervaded by a sense of nostalgia for a lost paradise.

A similar sense of nostalgia is experienced by Artemio Cruz when he recalls the large country estate formerly owned by his paternal ancestors. Although the house was in fact approaching complete dilapidation by the time Artemio was old enough to be aware of it, the image of the old house near which he was born remains with him throughout his life and has a great influence on it. Unlike Lorenza de Ovando, however, Artemio is able to recreate the past by constructing a replica of the Veracruz mansion in Coyoacán and by surrounding himself with all the objects he had known, if only at a distance, in his youth:

> . . . pensó en el detalle con que había cuidado la construcción y las comodidades de ésta, su verdadera casa . . . El prefirió encontrar estos viejos muros, con sus dos siglos de cantera y tezontle, que de una manera misteriosa lo acercaban a

> episodios del pasado, a una imagen de la tierra que no quería perder del todo. Sí, se daba cuenta de que había en todo ello una sustitución, un pase de magia. Y sin embargo las maderas, la piedra, las rejas, las molduras, las mesas de refectorio, la ebanistería, los peinazos y entrepaños, la labor de torno de las sillas conspiraban para devolverle realmente, con un ligerísimo perfume de nostalgia, escenas, aires, sensaciones táctiles de la juventud. (pp. 252-253)

To the aging Artemio Cruz, the house represents a permanence which he would like to experience in his own life. It is as if, by surrounding himself with old things, his own life could be prolonged.[2] In this case, therefore, the past is indicative of permanence and endurance. But the old house is also symbolic of something else equally important to Artemio. It represents a standard of excellence and a quality of elegance to which he aspires throughout his life. To some extent, Artemio's desire for an aristocratic way of life is satisfied at a relatively early age when he takes possession of the estate of Gamaliel Bernal (pp. 36-55), whose old mansion exudes a similar atmosphere of an aristocratic past:

> Al abrirse la puerta, él recordó el largo chorizo de salas que se sucedían desde el zaguán principal de la vieja casa poblana hasta la biblioteca, abriéndose, pieza tras pieza, sobre el patio de esmaltes y azulejos. ~~(p. 39)~~

Given the description of such environments, completely permeated by the past in one way or another, it is not surprising that the characters themselves dwell on the past to a great extent. Many of them not only recuperate their own personal past, but also that of their ancestors. Indeed, one of the most obvious characteristics of Fuentes' early fiction is his tendency to describe the past of his characters in considerable detail. In the majority of cases, the main characters are introduced in a "present" situation which undergoes relatively little chronological development. The story of their lives is told through a series of flashbacks interpolated into the narrative of the fictive present. It is therefore not their present or future that are of principal significance, but their past.

In contrast with three of Fuentes' early novels, "Chac Mool" is the only story of Los días enmascarados in which the personal or family past of a character plays a significant role. In the very first line of the story ("Hace poco tiempo, Filiberto murió ahogado en Acapulco" p. 7), the reader is made aware that the central character has died, and that in all likelihood the story will deal with the circumstances that led to his death. As has already been stated, the story, through a narrative dealing with his past, detailed in his diary and related by his friend who is the narrator, does indeed show what led to Filiberto's death. As we have also indicated previously, the fictive present is insignificant. The narrative of the past accounts for more than ninety-nine per cent of the text, in which evidence of a fictive present is implied more than made the subject of narration. The past is thus shown to be of utmost importance in the story. It almost effaces the present completely and acquires the essential significance of explaining the present. This characteristic, which is equally evident in some of Fuentes' other early works, is further emphasized in "Chac Mool" as a result of the particular technique employed in portraying the past. The relationship between the remote and the more recent past, as outlined above in Chapter II, and that between the recent past and the fictive present is basically the same. That is to say that, while the present may be explained in terms of the recent past, the recent past itself is to be explained through a knowledge of the more remote past. The nature of this structure is such that it leads us progressively to the still more distant past of the time of the Mayan god Chac Mool, which is the ultimate source of the events narrated in the story.

Although the fictive present is developed more in La región más transparente than in "Chac Mool", the present lives of the characters are nonetheless portrayed as a product of a personal and family past, which is the subject of the narrative in approximately one-third of the novel. The present situation of the characters is introduced and then explained through flashbacks. As already indicated in Chapter II, the personal and ancestral past of several characters is recuperated in eleven significant episodes of the novel. Yet, perhaps because of the number of characters involved, the past acquires a different significance, depending on the character whose past history is recuperated. For Pimpinela, Rosenda Pola, Lorenza de Ovando and Mercedes Zamacona, it represents a lost paradise which they are quite willing to remember nostalgically and try to recreate. For Federico Robles, Norma Larragoiti and Rodrigo Pola, on the other hand, the past is best forgotten. They consider it to be dead and to have little relationship to their present or future. In spite of their belief, however, at some point in their lives they are made to confront and reconcile themselves to the past from which they thought they had escaped. It is in this sense too that the past is inevitable, and that it acquires certain connotations of futurity.

What is learned from their predicament is the idea that in the future of every man lies an unavoidable confrontation with the past. Such a confrontation not only permits the character to reevaluate the past, but is also a likely source of influence on his conduct in the present and the future. The inevitability of this confrontation essentially appears to arise from the persistence of the past alongside a present which is its direct consequence. The past is therefore not synonymous with transience. As an integral part of the present, which it defines and explains, it has the qualities of permanence and will occasionally emerge as a force to be contended with that temporarily effaces the significance of the present itself. This idea, which seems to form the basis of the meaning of time both in La región más transparente and in Fuentes' early works in general, accounts for many of the narrative techniques he employs. It accounts for the fragmentation of the narrative and for the relative emphasis placed on the past. It also explains the alternation of the fictive past and the fictive present and gives rise to the multiple time lines evident in the novel as the principal means of portraying the coexistence of different times. The significant presence of a subjective sense of time, arising from the fact that

Fuentes attributes parts of the narrative to the memory of the character is, moreover, both a means of integrating the fictive past into the fictive present and a method of demonstrating the inevitability of the past, since the characters are unable to avoid their own recollections. Finally, the idea of the inevitability of the past is also a product, as seen in our Chapter III, of the cyclical nature attributed to time itself, whereby the past is destined to recur.

In La muerte de Artemio Cruz, in the second and third person narrative segments, more than two-thirds of the novel is devoted to the personal and ancestral past of Artemio Cruz. Since Artemio Cruz is but a few hours away from his death, his future is closed. Thus, he is representative of the situation of a dying man whose entire life flashes before him at the moment of death. For this reason, the novel might equally well be entitled "the life of Artemio Cruz". Unlike the characters of La región más transparente, however, Artemio Cruz seeks to recapture his past in the hope of finding some kind of redemption in it and because, at the moment of death, the little hope he has for a future can only be found in a recollection of the past. The review of the past that is presented in the novel is, therefore, a means of giving the dying man an opportunity to reevaluate his life. Although he may have some feelings of nostalgia about some moments of his past, particularly those spent with Lunero and Regina, and although he seeks refuge in the past as an escape from the hopelessness of the present, he is also obliged to reflect on moments that he would prefer to forget but which return to haunt him. This situation is, in itself, sufficient to convey the notion of inevitability with respect to a confrontation with the past. Even on his deathbed, Artemio cannot escape it. On the contrary, his death is portrayed as an inevitable encounter with all that he has hitherto represented. Moreover, just as in La región más transparente, the techniques employed contribute directly to the development of these ideas of time. The constant reappearance of the past in the present is formally demonstrated by the twelve third person narrative segments, devoted to the past, which regularly interrupt the narration of the fictive present. By the same token, the cyclical structure of the novel, to which we have already referred in our previous chapter, contributes equally to the idea of an inevitable meeting between the past and the present.

In contrast with the works discussed thus far, the past of the characters portrayed in Aura is not described in detail and does not have the same kind of effect on the fictive present. Nevertheless, in a more indirect manner, the past is shown to have just as great a significance in the story as a whole. The past of the widow Consuelo, in particular, is the source of the creation of the imaginary Aura, and is therefore the basis of the entire story narrated in the novel. As in certain episodes of both *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* and *La región más transparente*, the past is seen as a paradise, for which a particular nostalgia is felt. Unlike the situation for the characters of those two novels, however, that paradise is not lost to Consuelo Llorente. In *Aura*, the past re-lives and reappears in the present in the same sense that it does in "Tlactocatzine, del jardín de Flandes". In both works, the past is portrayed as a surviving past. Its survival should be distinguished from that discussed in relation to the other novels and short stories, however, in that it is literally reincarnated in the form of a spirit, in the re-creation of Consuelo's youth, in the person of Aura, and in the ghost of the Empress Carlota, in "Tlactocatzine, del jardín de Flandes". In many respects it is similar to the reincarnation of Chac Mool and, as previously demonstrated, is in part the product of Fuentes' recourse to the techniques of magical realism. In this sense, therefore, just as in the cyclical unfolding of events assumed by the narrative in order to convey the sensation of a meeting between the past and the present, the introduction of the past is equally the result of the thematic implications of the novel itself.

As demonstrated in our Chapter II, Las buenas conciencias is devoted almost entirely to recuperating the past and, as such, has much in common with "Chac Mool". The story of Jaime Ceballos is related through an extended flashback that spans one hundred years of ancestral and personal history and shows how the present is determined and to be explained by the past. The introductory paragraphs of the novel clearly indicate that Jaime will fail in his efforts to escape the bourgeois society into which he was born. He will never amount to anything but one of those "good consciences" and hypocrites, such as his uncle Balcárcel, the "beatas" and the priests. From this point of view, the purpose of the preliminary paragraphs is precisely to indicate the inevitable result or end of the story:

> Se iban, sobre todo, las palabras que ahora resonaban sin sentido. "Porque no he venido yo a llamar a los justos, sino a los pecadores." Caían con sus sílabas rotas en un pozo de indiferencia y tranquilidad. Se sentía tranquilo.

> Tenía que sentirse tranquilo . . . Los Ceballos de Guanajuato. Gente decente. Buenos católicos. Caballeros. No eran fantasmas. Los traía metidos adentro, de buena o mala gana. (p. 9)

These words establish that, from the outset, Jaime's spate of religious fervor and social idealism is insincere, as hypocritical as the conduct of those in his social class with whom he found fault. In fact, it is because he belongs to a particular social class that he is incapable of genuine sentiment and action. The pattern he is to follow as an adult has been predetermined and his rebellion is false. Fuentes himself appears to have had this intention in mind when portraying the protagonist of his novel, for, in a conversation with Luis Harss, he states that Jaime's final act of renunciation is his only sincere and honest one.[3] The same idea is implied in Jaime's own confession to his Indian friend, Lorenzo:

> "No he tenido el valor. No he podido ser lo que quería. No he podido ser un cristiano. No puedo quedarme solo con mi fracaso; no lo aguantaría; tengo que apoyarme en algo. No tengo más apoyo que esto: mis tíos, la vida que me prepararon, la vida que heredé de todos mis antepasados. Me someto al orden, para no caer en la desesperación. (p. 190)

The past is thus an important socio-economic factor in determining Jaime's lifestyle. Were it otherwise, it would have been difficult to justify so many pages in a short novel devoted to outlining the history of the protagonist's ancestors and the social environment in which he was raised. As Agustín Velarde Rosas points out, it is only on page 51, of a novel of 191 pages, that the account of Jaime Ceballos' own life really begins.[4] Such an arrangement in the content of the novel is essential, however, when it is considered in the light of the author's purpose. Jaime's re-discovery of the past not only gives him an opportunity to reevaluate it, but allows him to make some major decisions about how he will conduct himself in the future. His recourse to the past, however, provides him, in the person of his ancestors, with the role models he will emulate in the future. In many respects, Jaime's predicament is unavoidable. He cannot help being extremely conscious of the past because he is totally immersed in it, as it is represented by the house in which he lives, the city of Guanajuato itself, and the surviving members of his family, whose lives are particularly portrayed as a prolongation of the past. In order to understand Jaime's present and his future, therefore, an understanding of the past is essential, and it is for this reason that the present is almost completely effaced by the past in the narrative. Thus the narrative techniques used by Fuentes with respect to the portrayal of time are at the service of the thematic content of the novel.

In the majority of Fuentes' early works, it is often evident that the events surrounding individual characters are intended to represent a situation that is a reflection of the nation as a whole. To some considerable extent, it is for this reason that the history of Mexico appears as part of the narrative. In fact, a large proportion of what appears as the past in Fuentes' early works may be considered as historical document presented as fiction. In Fuentes' first three novels --La región más transparente, Las buenas conciencias, and La muerte de Artemio Cruz-- the narrative is frequently associated with historical data related to the salient periods of Mexican history. Although other periods, such as the Conquest and the regime of Porfirio Díaz, and some elements of world history, most notably the Spanish Civil War, are referred to, it is the Revolution of 1910 and its consequences that constitute the focus of Fuentes' interest in history. Not only is he principally concerned with the progress of society in the post-revolutionary period, but the characters on whom he concentrates are generally members of the new post-revolutionary bourgeoisie whose origins can be traced to some stage of the Revolution itself. In effect, it is on account of this aspect of Fuentes' focus on history that the three novels in question have been referred to by some critics as "la otra novela de la Revolución Mexicana".[5]

La región más transparente is limited to Mexican history. In addition to the general debate on the past, present and future of Mexico, which recurs as a sort of leit motif, specific moments of history are dwelt upon and integrated as part of the fiction. Major characters such as Gervasio Pola, Federico Robles, and Librado Ibarra are portrayed as part of the military struggle (pp. 78-90, 100-119), or of the post-revolutionary conflict (pp. 180-188, 379-384). In other sections, such as those entitled "Los de Ovando", "Rosenda" and "Pimpinela de Ovando" (pp. 91-100, 224-237, 289-301), the general historical situation between 1910 and 1951 serves as a background for the narration of events, while some specific historical incidents are mentioned as pertinent to several of the personal stories related (pp. 91, 216, 217, 218, for example).

In Fuentes' early fiction, objective history is shown to be intrinsically related to the individuals whose lives are narrated. In each case, their lives are fully integrated into history itself, with the result that they become a clear reflection of the course of the history of the nation. The life of Federico Robles, for example, his birth, his rise to success, his corruption and downfall, reflects the pattern and coincides with the pertinent dates of political history from the Revolution to the time at which the fictive present of the novel is set. Clearly, then, history in La región más transparente is not simply a matter of the objective recording of events, but is a combination of documented fact set in the context of the personal experiences attributed to the fictional characters. Indeed, the importance of these personal experiences as a means of providing an interpretation of history is to be found precisely in the fact that the historical past is integrated into the fictive present narrative in exactly the same manner and at the same time as the personal reminiscences of the characters themselves.

Just as the personal and ancestral past explains and to some extent determines the present of the characters, the historical past is presented by Fuentes as essential to an understanding of Mexico's present circumstances and to predicting or planning its future. For Fuentes, the past must be investigated, sounded and penetrated in order to comprehend the present and the future. These ideas are expressed by Manuel Zamacona of La región más transparente, in words which doubtless reflect Fuentes' own belief:

> Toda, toda nuestra historia pesa sobre nuestros espíritus, en su integridad sangrienta, sin que sea nunca plenamente pasado ninguno de sus hechos o sus hombres. (p. 278)
>
> Hay que resucitar algo y cancelar algo para que esa clave aparezca y nos permita entender a México. (p. 278)
>
> . . . quiero entender qué significó vestirse con plumas para ya no usarlas y ser yo, mi yo verdadero, sin plumas. No, no se trata de añorar nuestro pasado y regodearnos en él, sino de penetrar en el pasado, entenderlo, reducirlo a razón, cancelar lo muerto --que es lo estúpido, lo rencoroso--, rescatar lo vivo y saber, por fin, qué es México y qué se puede hacer con él. (p. 279)

The discussion of history set out in La región más transparente, whereby the past is related to the present and the future destiny of Mexico, provides an interesting view of Fuentes' interpretation of history that is entirely compatible with the way in which he portrays the inevitability of a confrontation with the past in the context of the lives of his fictional characters. Although there are a few instances in which historical documents are reproduced, either on the basis of the first hand knowledge of Federico Robles (pp. 119-123), or through Manuel Zamacona's writings (pp. 71-74), this discussion consists mainly of the interpretations of history through dialogues about it rather than through the narration of historical events from the point of view of the historian. It does not appear explicitly, therefore, in flashbacks to the past, but as part of the conversations or the musings of characters that occur in the fictive present. From these sources it is clear that Fuentes sees the Revolution as a most important landmark in Mexican history, that links the past to the present and contains the seeds of the future of the country. The intellectual Manuel Zamacona expresses it in the following manner:

> Sin la Revolución, nunca nos hubiéramos planteado el problema del pasado de México, de su significado . . . . Como que en la Revolución aparecieron, vivos y con el fardo de sus problemas, todos los hombres de la historia de México. (pp. 280-281)
>
> La Revolución nos obligó a darnos cuenta de que todo el pasado mexicano era presente y que, si recordarlo era doloroso, con olvidarlo no lograríamos suprimir su vigencia. (p. 282)

The Revolution is therefore a key to the explanation of the historical development of the new bourgeoisie represented in such characters as Federico Robles, Roberto Régules and Rodrigo Pola. The preponderance of Fuentes' recourse to history must, as a result, be seen as an affirmation on his part of the significance it has for the present. This idea is, perhaps, most clearly expressed in the notion that the past provides the patterns which are repeated in the course of the life of the nation in much the same way as similar patterns are inevitably repeated in the lives of individuals from one generation to the next. Such an interpretation of history is evident, for instance, in Pimpinela's comment about history with respect to her own family:

> Recuerdo que mi abuelita decía que iqual que la aristocracia porfiriana vio con horror la entrada a México de los Villas y los Zapatas, ella y las viejas familias vieron entrar a Díaz y a los suyos el siglo pasado. Entonces las gentes decentes eran lerdistas. Aunque también ellos se habían hecho ricos con los bienes del clero. (pp. 165-166)

Her view, and all that this entails with respect to the cyclical repetition of events, must undoubtedly be related to our discussion in our previous chapter with regard to the cyclical nature of time and its implications of the inevitability of the reappearance of the past.

Although mainly concerned with the Mexican Revolution, La muerte de Artemio Cruz does include some allusions to other historical periods such as the Conquest of Mexico, the periods of Santa Anna and Maximilian, and the Spanish Civil War. As in La región más transparente, the events of the past remembered by a character include scenes of the military struggle during the Revolution (pp. 71-85 and 170-202), moments of political intrigue (pp. 125-138), the political and economic situation at the end of the war (pp. 36-55), and the period of agrarian reform after the Revolution (pp. 93-116). In addition, the ninth section of the third person narrative vividly describes events of the Spanish Civil War, in which Artemio's son Lorenzo is killed, and the penultimate third person fragment describes the political and socio-economic environment at the time of the rule of Porfirio Díaz. Finally, the second person narrative voice refers, although in more symbolic terms, to the Conquest of Mexico (pp. 35-36).

The significance attributed to history in _La muerte de Artemio Cruz_ is basically the same as in _La región más transparente_, principally because it is conveyed through Federico Robles and Artemio Cruz, two characters who share many similarities. Like Federico Robles , the life of Artemio Cruz is used as a vehicle to portray the salient episodes of recent national history. Perhaps even more so than in the case of Robles, the principal patterns affecting Artemio's life are a direct reflection of those to be found in Mexican history and are made to coincide in particular with specific stages in the development of the

Revolution. Similarly, the techniques employed in integrating history into the narrative of La muerte de Artemio Cruz resemble those of La región más transparente, in that the character's memory is the device through which the past is re-presented. History, therefore, is portrayed as fundamentally related to personal experience. The historical past as much explains Artemio Cruz's present as it does Mexico's. In effect, the importance of history, particularly the history of the Revolution, in La muerte de Artemio Cruz can be summed up by the simple fact that Artemio Cruz, like Federico Robles or Roberto Régules in La región más transparente, represents a figure who would probably not exist were it not for the historical context of the Revolution. Thus, as in La región más transparente, the cyclical connotations of history are equally evident in La muerte de Artemio Cruz, as indicated by the following thoughts of Gamaliel Bernal:

> Artemio Cruz. Así se llamaba, entonces, el nuevo mundo surgido de la guerra civil; así se llamaban quienes llegaban a sustituirlo. Desventurado país --se dijo el viejo mientras caminaba, otra vez pausado, hacia la biblioteca y esa presencia indeseada pero fascinante--; desventurado país que a cada generación tiene que destruir a los antiguos poseedores y sustituirlos por nuevos amos, tan rapaces y ambiciosos como los anteriores. (p. 50)

The role of history as a determining factor of the present and the future is as evident in Las buenas conciencias as in the other works already discussed. In this novel, the whole of Chapter II (pp. 14-35) is devoted to outlining the history of the country, in general, and Guanajuato, in particular, in relation to the hundred years of the Ceballos family history in Mexico, covering a span of time from 1846, approximately, to the presidential election of 1946 (p. 182). It therefore includes the period covered by the final years of Santa Anna's regime, the presidencies of Benito Juárez and Porfirio Díaz, the Revolution and presidencies of the post-revolutionary period. Unlike the novels already discussed, however, the rapid outline of historical events described in Chapter II of Las buenas conciencias does not reveal any particular emphasis on the Revolution. It is simply one such event in a much larger cycle. Yet, as in La región más transparente and La muerte de Artemio Cruz, the vagaries of history are presented in the context of the lives of fictional characters. Although separated somewhat from the rest of the narrative and given a strictly chronological order, this review of history is not presented in isolation, as a documentary account, but is an integral part of the history of Jaime's family. Thus, regardless of the particular characteristics with which, in comparison with the other novels, history is presented, the idea that the personal past of a character is symbolically representative of a national, historical past is just as prevalent. It appears that, in all of these novels in which history plays an important role, Fuentes' preference is not to present the past in documentary form, but to interpret it, or, in the words of Manual Zamacona, "reducirlo a razón" (La región más transparente, p. 279). He does not endeavour to reproduce the various stages of the Revolution or the Conquest photographically, but to portray how they may be comprehended, in some cases from varying perspectives. He wishes to expose it to view, so that it may be understood and interpreted, and seen as having an inevitable effect on the present and the future.

The past as a central theme in Fuentes' early fiction is evident not only in the attention he gives to personal, ancestral and national history, but also in his interest in the mythical, atavistic past of the pre-Hispanic cultures of Mexico. Explicit examples of his recourse to the legendary past are to be found, in particular, in the two stories "Chac Mool" and "Por boca de los dioses", in which the gods of former times are portrayed as part of the everyday existence of contemporary society. In a more general sense, however, all the stories of Los días enmascarados are associated with the myths of an earlier age, if only as a result of the title given to the book itself:

> El título prefigura la dirección de su obra posterior. Alude a los cinco días finales del año azteca, los "nemontani": "Cinco enmascarados /con pencas de maguey", había dicho el poeta Tablada. Cinco días sin nombre, días vacíos durante los cuales se suspendía toda actividad --frágil puente entre el fin de un año y el comienzo de otro. En el espíritu de Fuentes, sin duda, la expresión tiene además un sentido de interrogación y de escarnio: ¿Qué hay detrás de las máscaras? El vaso de sangre del sacrificio prehispánico, el sabor de la pólvora de la madrugada del fusilamiento, el agujero negro del sexo, las arañas peludas del miedo, las risotadas del sótano y la letrina.[6]

But it is in "Chac Mool" and "Por boca de los dioses", above all, that the former gods are reincarnated most dramatically in modern Mexico. Two divergent realities, that derived from the myths of the past and that corresponding to contemporary life, are placed in the same context. Neither the content nor the outcome of either story can be explained away as madness, as a dream, or as a product of the over-active imagination of the protagonist. By combining these two elements, Fuentes endeavours to make the point that the implications of Mexico's mythical origins constitute a force that is still exerted in the present and that cannot be easily consigned to obvilion as a primitive, forgotten past. The past, even from mythical times, continues to influence the present, basically because human nature does not change. Man has always lived by the same patterns and will continue to do so. Thus, as Fuentes explains, he was motivated to write "Chac Mool" by the idea that the past will continuously appear to have an effect in the present:

> El "Chac Mool" surgió, . . . de la lectura de una gacetilla de periódico. Una exposición de arte mexicano visitó Europa en 1952. En ella figuraba el Chac Mool, dios de la lluvia. Este a su paso produjo tempestades y cataclismos. La gente le ponía monedas en la barriga, e inmediatamente se desataba una tormenta espantosa. Los datos de la nota roja artística enfocaron mi atención en un hecho evidente para todos los mexicanos: hasta qué grado siguen vivas las formas cosmológicas de un México perdido para siempre y que sin embargo se resiste a morir y se manifiesta de tarde en tarde a través de un misterio, una aparición, un reflejo. La anécdota gira en torno a la persistencia de nuestras viejas formas de vida.[7]

Both in "Chac Mool" and in "Por boca de los dioses", the influence of the mythical past persists in the present and determines the outcome of events. The death of Filiberto and Oliverio is brought about through the direct intervention of the gods of pre-Columbian Mexico and, in both instances, death is the result of a conflict between the past and the present. Both characters endeavour, in some way, to free themselves from the past. Thus Filiberto's flight to Acapulco is an attempt to escape the rain god Chac Mool, which is frustrated when he drowns in the ocean. Similarly, Oliverio's death at the hands of Tlazol, the Axtec goddess of luxury, is a punishment for having made light of tradition and is described in a scene that evokes the sacrificial rites of earlier times:

> Tlazol me abrazó en un espasmo sin suspiros. El puñal quedó allí, en mi centro, como un pivote loco, girando solo mientras ella abría la puerta a la caravana de ruidos minuciosos, de alas y culebras, que se amasaban en el pasillo, y las guitarras torcidas y las voces internas cantaban. (pp. 81-82)

The implications of both stories, therefore, are that the mythical past is neither to be denied nor eluded, even in the present. It is an inevitable and unavoidable force to be reckoned with.

In comparison to these two stories, in Fuentes' early novels the mythical past and the gods of ancient Mexico are portrayed in a less direct manner. That is to say that the gods themselves are not reincarnated in the present as they are in "Chac Mool" and "Por boca de los dioses". In La región más transparente, however, there are two characters, Teódula Moctezuma and Ixca Cienfuegos, who appear to act as the contemporary agents of the ancient gods. In addition to the obvious indigenous connotations suggested by the names Moctezuma and Ixca, both characters are portrayed as having characteristics of an earlier age. Teódula, described as being "anclada en un día y un año que habían desaparecido hacía siglos, que nada tenían que ver con el momento ineludible de ese día" (p. 341), seems to represent the persistence of pre-Hispanic times. Cienfuegos possesses some of the characteristics of an Aztec god; he is not only described as dark and mysterious, but his love of the taste of blood and of sacrifice is often alluded to:

> --Es un sangrón, caro Príncipe. Como Dios: en todas partes, nadie lo puede ver. (p. 41)
>
> Volvió a morderse la mano; hundió los dientes en la misma herida hasta sentir que por los labios le corría la nueva tibieza. Cerró los ojos; quería la boca llena del sabor acre, metálico, de su propria sangre. La cabeza le nadaba en ese sabor, y la sangre le zumbaba en las orejas como una doble respiración: la que se une en la hora del terror, la respiración del hombre y la del fantasma, el uno frente al otro, pero invisibles. (p. 252)

Like a god, he appears to be a shadow, living on air, not needing sleep or food: "Tú que vives como sombra, hurgando, escondido, comiéndote las vidas de los demás. Tú que no tienes carne ni huesos" (p. 448).

Furthermore, both Ixca and Teódula are associated with the rituals of the past and with the notion of sacrifice. Teódula is assisted by Ixca when she performs an ancestral rite in which the skulls of her dead husband and children are unearthed from beneath the floor of her hut and prayed over (pp. 209-215). She maintains, moreover, that the ancient gods still roam the earth and that they continue to demand sacrifices: "Te lo dije; ellos andan escondidos, pero luego salen. A recibir la ofrenda y el sacrificio" (p. 406). Ixca's involvement with the past goes somewhat further and, as previously indicated, has greater significance for the development of the narrative as a whole. It is he who serves as the instrument through which the past is brought back to the characters in the novel. His attitude with respect to the past is expressed in the following passage in which one of the major themes of the novel is also summarized:

> El pueblo de México, que es el único contemporáneo del mundo, el único pueblo que aún vive con los dientes pegados a la ubre original. Este conjunto de malos olores y chancros y pulque viscoso y carne de garfios que se apeñusca en el lodo indiferenciado del origen. Todos los demás caen, hoy, hacia ese origen que

> sin saberlo los determina; sólo nosotros
> hemos vivido siempre en él. (p. 377)

As the modern agents of the gods, Teódula and Ixca consider it their duty to provide the human sacrifices which will appease the gods and ensure the continuation of life. As Ixca says to Rodrigo Pola, continued sacrifice is necessary: "Es que un solo sacrificio, así fuera ejemplar, no bastaba. Era preciso un sacrificio diario, un alimento diario para que el sol iluminara, corriera y alimentara a su vez" (p. 264). Thus Teódula and Ixca pursue a number of other characters in the novel, in search of those sacrifices. Teódula is indirectly involved in the death of Norma Larrogoiti by fire, and insists on witnessing her end (pp. 404-407). By the same token, Ixca almost causes Norma to drown in Acapulco (pp. 315-317), and brings about the financial ruin of Federico Robles almost single-handedly. Finally, near the end of the novel, still in pursuit of a human sacrifice, but only as if to warn an intended victim of what is to come, Ixca almost causes the death of Rodrigo Pola, when he deliberately accelerates the car which Rodrigo is driving.

Although the mythical past in _La región más transparente_ is presented less directly, less allegorically and without recourse to some of the more obvious techniques associated with magical realism, the novel has connotations similar to those evident in the two stories referred to earlier, as a result of the presence of the mythical past. Indeed, in La región más transparente, the point that the mythical past continues to exert a significant influence on the present is made that much more forcefully, perhaps, since the idea that it must inevitably confront modern Mexicans is conveyed in a far more realistic setting.

Destiny

The theme of human destiny is undoubtedly one of the most consistently developed in Fuentes' early fiction. Although the term itself appears to have somewhat varying connotations,[8] depending on the context in which it occurs, Fuentes' general concern is to describe the conditions of existence that must be faced and that man must either be reconciled with or overcome. Of equal concern is his preoccupation with the relationship between individual and collective destiny. Yet, however important the theme of destiny may be in his work, it should not necessarily be presumed that Fuentes' perception of the matter is based on an assumption that human existence is subject to some absolute form of predetermination. On the contrary, his work should be seen as a discussion of the problem, undertaken in the context of an examination of all sides of the issue.

Our discussion of the thematic implications of the past in this chapter has already shown that one of the most important and most basic conditions of human existence depicted in Fuentes' early works is related to the concept of the inevitability of the past. His characters are not only portrayed as being unable to avoid the past because of its persistence in the present, but also as obliged to expect an encounter with the past at some time in the course of their lives. Since the past is inescapable, the destiny of the individual would therefore appear, at least in one sense, to consist in having to relive his own life, that of his ancestors, and that of his nation, and to repeat the archetypal patterns of human existence. In effect, this is precisely the pattern of existence illustrated and discussed by Fuentes and is one of the reasons why the past plays such a predominant role in his narratives.

In at least two of Fuentes' early novels, La región más transparente and La muerte de Artemio Cruz, man's life is portrayed, both individually and collectively, as possessing a sense of initial unity which is gradually fragmented and dispersed in the course of time. This sense of unity at the point of origin is also portrayed as a source of perfection which is progressively lost through dispersion and degeneration. Hence, the terms "origen", "fragmentación" and "destino" are constantly interrelated throughout both novels.[9] Dispersion and fragmentation are synonymous and the various units of dispersion into which the life of an individual is broken are also referred to as fragments.[10] Fragmentation is initially caused by the inevitable passage of time, but, more specifically, is the product of the choices the individual must make throughout his life between one course and another. These instances of freedom of choice constitute the landmarks standing between a man's origin and his ultimate destiny, while the choices that are refused represent other possible destinies or routes he might have followed.

Writing on the dialectic of destiny in Fuentes' novels, Paul Alexandru Georgescu describes how Fuentes' view of destiny coincides with traditional concepts and conforms to a general pattern that is developed in three distinct stages:

> Como todas las grandes visiones del destino humano, la de Carlos Fuentes incluye un ciclo, una sucesión de etapas, y tiende hacia una solución, hacia un desenlace . . . Los antropólogos y los historiadores de la religión han puesto de relieve que en las soteriologías míticas y religiosas el

> ciclo del destino humano es concebido como una serie de estados exteriores, delimitados y opuestos, como hechos distintos y sucesivos: gracia, caída, redención. A diferencia de tal representación Carlos Fuentes nos brinda una dialéctica laica y moderna del destino humano, una dialéctica que integra e interfiere no hechos, sino emociones profundas. El camino que estas emociones recorren es por lo tanto más dramático y llega a un desenlace más humano, más abierto a las posibilidades de la duda y de la elección. Llamo este camino dialéctico porque sus tres etapas se suceden en relaciones de contraste y superación . . . Creo poder afirmar que la dialéctica del destino en la obra de Carlos Fuentes se cumple a través de tres etapas: a) la aspiración exaltante, b) la culpa dolorosa y c) la esperanza de purificación. Se trata, pues, de una dialéctica interior, pero proyectada sobre el telón de fondo de la circunstancia mexicana.[11]

The three stages are, indeed, evident in the portrayal of the three major characters found in Fuentes' early fiction: Jaime Ceballos, Federico Robles and Artemio Cruz. To a lesser extent, they are also evident in some minor characters. For those three characters, an initial aspiration for purity and perfection is followed by a period in which their aspiration is distorted or even lost entirely. Finally, they experience a desire to return to their initial state of purity. The paths followed by Robles and Cruz are remarkably similar. Both have rural backgrounds, the one Indian and the other mestizo. The incorrupt state of Artemio Cruz's condition, when he is close to his origins, is evident in the account of the childhood he spent in a paradise of innocence and simplicity with his uncle Lunero, alongside a river in the country (pp. 280-283), and in the idyllic affair he later had with Regina (pp. 63-81). When both Cruz and Robles become involved in the revolutionary struggle, it is for relatively altruistic reasons: they are the underprivileged who desire to see justice. Artemio Cruz recalls how he was influenced as a young man by his teacher Sebastián and joined the Revolution:

> De Veracruz, de la tierra, hasta la ciudad de México y de allí hasta Sonora, cuando el maestro Sebastián le pidió que hiciera lo que los viejos ya no podían: ir al Norte, tomar las armas y liberar al país. Si era un escuincle entonces, aunque estuviera por cumplir los vientiún años. Palabra, ni siquiera se había acostado con una mujer. Y cómo le iba a fallar al maestro Sebastián, que le había enseñado las tres cosas que sabía: leer, escribir y odiar a los curas. (p. 70)

Robles' understanding of his own motives is not quite so clear, but he sees his joining the Revolution as having been a natural response to circumstances:

> Luego me contaron que habían lazado a mi madre y cuando mi hermano mayor, el carpintero, salió a vengarla, la leva federal se lo llevó y los demás ya no chistaron. Siguieron cultivando la parcela. No crea usted que esto me dio ganas de vengarme, pues yo no

> entendía nada . . . y aunque lo hubiera entendido, no hubiera ido por ese motivo a la revolución. La revolución llegó como llegan el sol o la luna, como llueve o hace hambre. Hay que levantarse o acostarse. O cubrirse del agua, o comer. Así. Yo nunca supe de dónde surgió, pero una vez que estuvo allí, había que entrarle al toro. Después algunos, como yo, encontramos las justificaciones. (pp. 106-107)

Thus, Georgescu speaks of the "need for fulfilment" which, like an act of "rebellious heroism", impelled both Robles and Cruz towards the Revolution:

> Heroicidad rebelde, porque la aspiración a la plenitud se enfrenta y choca con circunstancias establecidas, hostiles al hombre: pobreza, injusticia y prepotencia, en el México prerrevolucionario.[12]

The second stage in the destiny of Federico Robles and Artemio Cruz, that of "guilt", is arrived at through the distortion of the ideals which originally impelled them. As Georgescu points out with respect to Artemio Cruz, the possibility that this might occur existed from the beginning and was, to some extent, influenced by factors beyond Artemio's control:

> Y detrás de las circunstancias desfavorables, las fuerzas contrarias --las del egoísmo, del desdén a los demás, del privilegio opresivo-- obligan a que el afán de plenitud tome la forma de la impugnación, de furor justiciero. El ideal cobra entonces visos de venganza

> y basta pensar en las afrentas que mueven a la lucha a Artemio Cruz: el martirio de su madre, su condición de bastardo, la ejecución de su amada Regina.[13]

Yet, both Cruz and Robles are responsible for their own downfall. Both become wealthy businessmen by recognizing, at an early stage, the opportunities that were provided by the Revolution, and by exploiting those opportunities to their personal advantage through whatever means necessary. The outcome for both characters is a sense of guilt felt to such an extent that they constantly endeavour to exonerate themselves and their actions:

> Estos hombres se sienten culpables, hondamente culpables de haber traicionado su propio ser, el puro, el noble, el humano. Es lo que explica su obsesivo deseo de justificarse, la envidia secreta que ellos --los vencedores-- nutren frente a los vencidos, frente a los que dieron su vida para ayudar al camarada herido, frente a los que fracasaron por haberse juntado a los desheredados, frente a los que supieron guardar su pureza en la derrota y la muerte.[14]

The stigma of guilt resulting from the betrayal of ideals is exemplified directly and symbolically through a number of means. In La región más transparente in particular, the movement from authenticity to inauthenticity, from idealism to corruption, is symbolized in the accumulation of masks. Apart from Ixca Cienfuegos, only Hortensia Chacón is aware of the masks behind which Robles' true face is hidden:

> Porque el mundo que será al fin el mundo de Federico Robles está aquí, créame usted. Todavía no, porque Federico no es quien es en realidad, sino lo que la vida lo ha hecho. Como yo. Pero atrás, señor, atrás está esa cara verdadera, la primera, la única. (p. 354)

The change from authenticity to inauthenticy is most evident, however, in the narration of the moments in which the individual, confronted with a choice, might have pursued a destiny different from that which he made for himself, might have retained some measure of idealism, and have avoided the dispersion of self that results from his own conduct.

In La muerte de Artemio Cruz, in which the theme of destiny is treated in greater detail, the idea that Artemio could have forged a different destiny is obtained by focussing on all the decisive moments in his life. These moments correspond, in effect, to the twelve third person narrative sections in which the important decisions taken in his life are described. The first landmark of Cruz's life is placed at the moment of Lunero's death, when the young Cruz must decide whether he will stay in Veracruz or seek his fortune elsewhere. As the novel itself reveals, Artemio's future choices have already begun to diminish at the moment of his first major decision:

> Nadie se enterará, salvo tú, quizás. Que tu existencia será fabricada con todos los hombres. Que no te faltará, ni te sobrará, una sola oportunidad para hacer de tu vida lo que quieras que sea. Y si serás una cosa, y no la otra, será porque, a pesar de todo, tendrás que eligir. Tus elecciones no negarán el resto de tu posible vida, todo lo que dejarás atrás cada vez que elijas: sólo la adelgazarán. (p. 34)

Rearranged in chronological order, the other moments of decision are as follows: he left his teacher Sebastián to join the Revolution (p. 70); he abandoned a wounded soldier to die in the forest when, although with some risk to his own life, he might have saved him (p. 76); he temporarily deserted his forces in the midst of battle (p. 73); he sacrificed the life of Gonzalo Bernal and the Yaqui Tobías in order to escape the prison at Perales (pp. 198-201); he took possession of Gonzalo's heritage and married Catalina, Gonzalo's sister (pp. 36-55); he chose not to break the silence which characterized the first five years of his marriage to Catalina (pp. 113-114); he adopted the necessary political posture to retain the favour of the party in power (pp. 125-138); he refused to commit himself to his mistress Laura, with whom he had the most significant relationship since Regina's death and who gave him the opportunity of reestablishing a sense of authenticity (pp. 210-219); he allowed his son Lorenzo to go to Spain to fight in the Civil War (pp. 227-228); he acted as "front-man" for North American businessmen in the exploitation of Mexico's mineral wealth (pp. 18-28); he bought himself the favors of Lilia (pp. 147-162); he kept Lilia in virtual confinement as his mistress for several years (pp. 250-270).

Each of these decisive points in Artemio's life contributes to a source of guilt, but each is also indicative of a possibility presented to him of changing the course of his destiny and, to some extent, of redressing the past. The voice of his subconscious consistently points this out to him, as on the occasion when he could have made his peace with Catalina:

> Tú romperás el silencio esa noche, le hablarás a Catalina, le pedirás que te perdone, le hablarás de los que murieron por tí, le pedirás que te acepte así, con esas culpas, le pedirás que no te odie, que te acepte así. (p. 247)

But Artemio Cruz does not choose this, or any other, redeeming course. Acting out of fear, self-interest or pride,[15] he consistently chooses to allow others to make the sacrifices that will result in benefits to himself. As Fuentes himself has pointed out, "Cada una de sus elecciones supone el sacrificio de una persona (una vida, un destino), el sacrificio de un amor, de una posibilidad de ser".[16] Artemio consistently causes or allows these sacrifices because he feels that his own destiny is strengthened as a result of the sacrifices of others: the soldier in the forest (p. 76), Regina, the Yaqui Tobías, Gonzalo Bernal:

> La ironía de ser él quien regresaba a Puebla, y no el fusilado Bernal, le divertía. Era en cierto modo una mascarada, una sustitución, una broma que podía jugarse con la mayor seriedad, pero también era un certificado de vida, de la capacidad para sobrevivir y fortalecer el propio destino con los ajenos. (p. 43)
>
> Gracias. Pude haber muerto en Perales. Pude haber muerto con ese soldado. Pude haber muerto en aquel cuarto desnudo, frente a ese hombre gordo. Yo sobreviví. Tú moriste. Gracias. (p. 245)

Artemio Cruz sees a possibility of living another possible destiny through his son Lorenzo and for this reason takes Lorenzo to Veracruz, to the land in which he was born and which he left at thirteen years of age. Although with some difficulty, the dying man expresses the motives he felt at that point in his life:

> Yo me diría la verdad, si no sintiera mis

> labios blancos . . . me diría que no bastaba reiterar el tiempo y el lugar, la pura permanencia; me diría que algo más, un deseo que nunca expresé, me obligó a conducirlo --ay, no sé, no me doy cuenta--, sí, a obligarlo a encontrar los cabos del hilo que yo rompí, a reanudar mi vida, a completar mi otro destino, la segunda parte que yo no pude cumplir. (p. 242)

It is in Veracruz that Lorenzo decides to go to Spain to fight on the side of the Republicans in the Civil War. He lives his last hours, at the age of nineteen, crossing the Pyrenees to reach France. As if Lorenzo had fulfilled his other destiny, the old man on his death bed thanks his dead son for having shown him what it could have been: ". . . ay, gracias, que me enseñaste lo que pudo ser mi vida, ay, gracias, que viviste ese día por mí" (p. 244).

The paths followed by Federico Robles in accumulating a sense of guilt similar to that experienced by Artemio Cruz are also revealed in passages devoted to the past, in which either Ixca Cienfuegos forces him to remember, or other characters recall Robles' role in the Revolution and his subsequent rise to power (pp. 100-123, pp. 180, 188, 379-384, 409-428). As with Artemio Cruz, each landmark in the fulfilment of his destiny involves a sacrifice on the part of another person: Mercedes Zamacona is left to bear his child alone; Librado Ibarra and

Feliciano Sánchez, whom he would not support for fear of jeopardizing his own situation, are abandoned to their fate. Unlike Artemio Cruz, however, Robles is not so overwhelmed by guilt, even when Cienfuegos forces him to see his present life from the perspective of the past; but Ixca considers him guilty, and compares him with Porfirio Díaz:

> Los ojos de Cienfuegos, sonrientes, absorbieron todo el físico, tenso y fláccido a la vez, del banquero y, en silencio, sus labios fueron repitiendo las palabras de otra entrevista, las palabras de otro hombre que inventó el poder mexicano, de otro gran chingón . . . Ixca pensó que esas anchas aletas nasales, esos ojos de saurio, ese cutis cuidadosamente blanqueado, de Robles, se semejaban a los de Porfirio Díaz. (p. 122)

If Cienfuegos is Robles' witness, Catalina is Artemio's. It is she who is extremely conscious of Artemio's guilt:

> "¿Crees que después de hacer todo lo que has hecho, tienes todavía derecho al amor? ¿Crees que las reglas de la vida pueden cambiarse para que, encima de todo, recibas esas recompensas? Perdiste tu inocencia en el mundo de afuera. No podrás recuperarla aquí adentro, en el mundo de los afectos . . . No puedes encontrar en mí lo que ya sacrificaste, lo que ya perdiste para siempre y por tu propia obra. No sé de dónde vienes. No sé qué has hecho. Sólo sé que en tu vida perdiste lo que después me hiciste perder a mí: el sueño, la inocencia. Ya nunca seremos los mismos." (pp. 113-114)

Of the third stage of human destiny, the hope for purification, Georgescu affirms,

> Confiésenlo o no, estos hombres se sienten culpables . . . Es lo que explica por fin la más honda consecuencia de la culpa: el sentido de frustración y la nostalgia óntica, la añoranza de ser otro, de recuperar de modo cualquiera, por sí o por otros, la pureza inicial. Esta posibilidad de superar la culpa y afirmar con nueva fuerza la plenitud humana nos lleva a la tercera y última etapa, menos definida en la creación novelística del autor.[17]

Although it is clear that Fuentes believes in the possibility of purification, of returning to the state of perfection associated with an original condition, his characters are not generally able to obtain it. Artemio Cruz's feelings of guilt, particularly when confronted by the imminence of his death, leads him to attempt to redeem himself through several means. His recourse to the past through memory is itself an attempt to find some redeeming aspect in his life. The nostalgia he feels for some aspects of his past, particularly his childhood with Lunero and his love for Regina, and, as we have already noted, his son Lorenzo, represents possibilities of recapturing an original state of purity either through the past or the life of another individual. His unconscious attempt to create another self that will suffer the ill effects of his existence and make it possible for him to purify himself also fails. Throughout the novel, the symbolism of the twin and the mirror image, as well as the frequent use of the term "el otro", are indicative of a duality of character reflecting Artemio's need to duplicate himself. Yet, notwithstanding his attempts, since he is faced with imminent extinction, all true opportunities have passed and Artemio's endeavours are doomed to frustration.

Unlike Artemio Cruz, Federico Robles is not on his deathbed and feels little need for redemption. His is therefore not a conscious effort of purification. He senses, however, that something essential is lacking in his life, something which he manages to capture in moments spent with his blind Indian mistress, Hortensia Chacón. He is aware of the masks he has accumulated and of his conscious efforts to efface his Indian origin. When Robles is forced into bankruptcy by a trick of Cienfuegos and his days as a financial magnate are over, he returns to Hortensia Chacón and a simple life in a village. His social downfall and subsequent return, or recovery of the past with Hortensia Chacón, may be seen as a removal of the masks he had accumulated. His symbolic return to his past, to his Indian origins and his adoption of a more simple life, are, in fact, representative of a kind of purification that was denied Artemio Cruz.

The theme of the destiny of Mexico, treated to some extent in La muerte de Artemio Cruz, but principally in La región más transparente, with particular reference to the Revolution, follows the same basic pattern as the individual destinies attributed to Artemio Cruz and Federico Robles. It may even be argued that, because of the broad social contexts described in the novel, the portrayal of individual destiny in La región más transparente is somewhat overshadowed by the attention given to the collective fortunes of Mexico and its people. The initial idealism of the Revolution, symbolized in characters such as Froilán Reyero, Gervasio Pola, Flores Magón, Felipe Ángeles, and Féliciano Sánchez, all of whom died for it, and Librado Ibarra, who was completely ruined by it (pp. 180-188), was corrupted in figures such as Robles, as it was in Artemio Cruz, Gavilán and Jiménez in La muerte de Artemio Cruz (pp. 125-138). The desire for purification, for a return to the source, is symbolized by Manuel Zamacona, the young intellectual of La región más transparente. The urge for a return to the ideals of the Revolution, however, is also symbolically defeated, for Manuel Zamacona is pointlessly and stupidly murdered in a bar by one of the very peasants for whom he struggled.

Some fairly obvious links exist between the concept of human destiny discussed above and the techniques which Fuentes employed in portraying the lives governed by this concept. The constant recourse to the past by the characters in an attempt to obtain "purification" or the restoration of original unity is exemplified by the intrusion of long memory sequences in the fictive present. The fragmentation of the narrative evident in all three of the major novels, but particularly in *La región más transparente* and *La muerte de Artemio Cruz*, is a direct result of the fragmentation in the lives presented. In this regard, Georgescu commented,

> Al exponer artísticaments esta visión dialéctica del destino, Carlos Fuentes recurre sobre todo a dos modalidades de composición, especialmente propias para asegurar el relieve dramático y la tensión emotiva de sus novelas. La primera modalidad consiste en operar truncamientos o introducir rupturas en la sucesión de las etapas, en exponer, con el efecto dramático inherente, destinos mutilados. En realidad, ninguno de sus personajes vive de modo completo las tres etapas, ninguno --ni siquiera Artemio Cruz de trayectoria vital tan larga y compleja--cumple su destino.[18]

Moreover, the development of the narrative as a composite of different time lines that unfold simultaneously is itself an indication of duality of character and of the idea that destiny is the product of different times and possibilities. By the same token, evidence of a cyclical pattern in the lives of the individuals whose stories are told is also a relevant factor in tracing their destiny. That is to say, that the concept of a cyclical pattern itself entails a return to a point of departure, to the initial state of purity.

The theme of destiny is not treated in exactly the same manner in Las buenas conciencias as in the two novels discussed above, but the difference is really no more than a matter of degree. Whereas both La región más transparente and La muerte de Artemio Cruz portray the unfolding of a complete cycle in the destiny of an individual, Las buenas conciencias presents an extremely detailed treatment of only the first stage --"la aspiración exaltante"-- and the mere beginnings of the second --"la culpa dolorosa". Jaime Ceballos' religious fervour, and his pseudo-heroic rebellion against the pettiness and hypocrisy[19] of the Ceballos family and their friends, are both perfect examples of the first stage of destiny, as typified in Fuentes' novels and analysed by Paul Alexandru Georgescu. Jaime's fervour, in fact, provides the basic subject matter of the novel. It is only towards the end, when it is clear that Jaime has capitulated and will continue to live according to the patterns established by the Ceballos family, that the second stage is touched upon. However, Jaime has already made some choices and accumulated some sources of guilt. He is aware, for instance, that he could have made an effort to reach out to his father and his mother; he is not sure whether he could have helped Ezequiel Zuno, but he believes that he has not been entirely honest with his Indian friend Manuel. However, if Jaime Ceballos is to follow the paths of Jorge Balcárcel, Artemio Cruz and Federico Robles, a course that is clearly indicated for him by his family history, it is clear that there will be a long record of accumulated guilt from which he will later hope to be relieved.

As we have previously mentioned with relation to the idea of the inevitability of the past, there is an element of socio-economic determinism in _Las buenas conciencias_, in relation to Jaime Ceballos, that does not appear to the same extent in Fuentes' other works. In _Las buenas conciencias_, Jaime is shown to be incapable of escaping from patterns of behaviour long since established by his ancestors. To this extent, therefore, he is predetermined to behave in a particular manner, to follow a particular area of studies, fill a particular type of social position, and hold a particular kind of job. All his efforts to escape this mould are therefore destined to failure. When such ideas do appear in Fuentes' other works, in Part III of La región más transparente to be precise, it is of interest to note that they are also illustrated through Jaime Ceballos, who is now married and whose wife, Betina Régules, has inherited her particular role in society from her father.

In Las buenas conciencias, as in La región más transparente and La muerte de Artemio Cruz, the techniques employed in portraying the lives of the characters appear to be a product of the concept of destiny itself. The linear chronological structure employed in presenting the past, which constitutes virtually the entire novel, is a result of the need to demonstrate the manner in which Jaime's destiny has been directly passed on to him by his ancestors. The cyclical pattern that appears as part of this structure, to which we referred in our previous chapter, entails, moreover, a certain element of predeterminism. Just as the cycle allows no escape, since its completion is somewhat inevitable, the character who is predetermined to conduct his life in a particular fashion cannot escape that mould.

The concept of predeterminism, however, is not limited to the influence of socio-economic factors or to *Las buenas conciencias*, but is characteristic of human destiny portrayed in the majority of Fuentes' works. Yet it is a particular kind of predeterminism. Although man's life is bounded by a predetermined beginning and end, his birth and death, between these two points the individual is free to make a certain number of choices. However, his absolute freedom of choice diminishes to a certain degree each time that a decision is made, since each decision will not only narrow the possibilities of further choice in the future, but will set the individual on a predetermined course of action. This notion is expressed in the following terms by the subconscious voice of *La muerte de Artemio Cruz*:

> elegirás, para sobrevivir elegirás, elegirás entre los espejos infinitos uno solo, uno solo que te reflejará irrevocablemente, que llenará de una sombra negra los demás espejos, los matarás antes de ofrecerte, una vez más, esos caminos infinitos para la elección:
>
> decidirás, escogerás uno de los caminos, sacrificarás los demás: te sacrificarás al escoger, dejarás de ser todos los otros hombres que pudiste haber sido, querrás que otros hombres --otro-- cumpla por ti la vida que mutilaste al elegir: al elegir sí, al elegir no, al permitir que no tu deseo, idéntico a tu libertad, te señalara un laberinto sino tu interés, tu miedo, tu orgullo. (p. 209)

Although the particular form of predeterminism evident in the case of Artemio Cruz would appear to be

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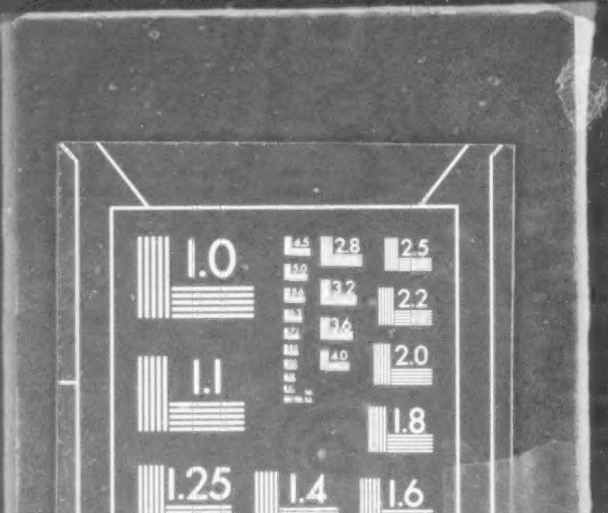
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applicable to a number of the other characters portrayed in Fuentes' early fiction, Aura seems to present a notable exception. From the beginning of the novel, Felipe Montero appears to have little choice in determining his future. The advertisement which he reads in the newspaper, offering the position of historian in Consuelo's house, seems to be destined for him alone:

> Se solicita historiador joven. Ordenado. Escrupuloso. Conocedor de la lengua francesa. Conocimiento perfecto, coloquial. Capaz de desempeñar labores de secretario. Juventud, conocimiento del francés, preferible si ha vivido en Francia algún tiempo. Tres mil pesos mensuales, comida y recámara cómoda, asoleada, apropiada estudio. Sólo falta tu nombre. Sólo falta que las letras más negras y llamativas del aviso informen: Felipe Montero. Se solicita Felipe Montero. (p. 9)

Moreover, the use of the second person narrative in combination with the future tense conveys a sense of inevitability whereby Felipe is constantly told what he will do. It produces an effect similar to that of the imperative mood. The atmosphere created by the mysterious old house also produces a sense of inevitability with regards to Felipe's destiny, a feeling that, once he becomes involved in the situation, he cannot escape. In fact, there are several indications that Felipe is entrapped in the house. From the beginning, his efforts to return to his own house are thwarted. He is told that living in Consuelo's house is one of the conditions of the position he has accepted (p. 17). When he mentions the possibility of returning to collect his belongings, he is forced to turn his keys over to Aura, who insists that it will be done by someone else (pp. 22 and 23). Furthermore, Felipe is not even allowed to visit the garden, but is told by Consuelo that it does not exist (p. 30).

A similar sense of a fate that is sealed is evident with regards to the narrator and central character of "Tlactócatzine, del jardín de Flandes", who, once he has moved into the old mansion, is unable to leave even to make a telephone call. The forces that retain him, however, are somewhat less tangible than those of _Aura_. He is not told that he should not leave; he simply finds it impossible to do so. Neither the narrator of "Tlactocatzine, del jardín de Flandes" nor Felipe accept their fate, but struggle against it until it is finally clear to them that they cannot escape. There are other characters of Fuentes' early fiction, however, who accept their fate as sealed and do not endeavour to struggle against the forces of destiny. As a result, a sense of fatalism, of powerlessness in the face of destiny, is introduced into some of his works. Although the idea is evident to some extent in Jaime Ceballos' final resignation and acceptance of the order of things in his family, it is really in La región más transparente that it is given most emphasis. It is also of interest to note that this sense of fatalism is most apparent among the characters representative of the lower classes and those with the closest ties to indigenous Mexico. Hortensia Chacón, Federico Robles' Indian mistress, appears to have little difficulty in accepting her sad fate (pp. 345-355). Similarly, there is a general sense of acceptance of fate among the members of Gabriel's family, as indicated in the expressions they use: "--Qué más da, qué más da . . . --Qué le vamos a hacer . . ." (p. 221). The same marked note of fatalism, moreover, is evident in the phrases spoken by Ixca Cienfuegos which open and close the novel: "Aquí nos tocó. Qué le vamos a hacer. En la región más transparente del aire" (pp. 21 and 470). In these words, Roberto E. Ríos sees even broader implications:

> Esta obra apasionante y profunda termina con una nota de pagana resignación. Una invocación a los dioses, hecha por Ixca Cienfuegos, que no es otra cosa que un resumen de la historia trágica de México y de los mexicanos, termina con las repetidas palabras "Aquí nos tocó. Qué le vamos a hacer."[20]

In the light of these considerations, it seems that, if there are not two types of destiny portrayed in Fuentes' early works, there are at least two distinct attitudes towards it, the one perhaps more representative of indigenous pre-Hispanic thought, as Ríos indicates, and the other more representative of modern Mexico with its marked European and North American influences.

Myth

Two of the most important conclusions with respect to the interpretation of time which may be drawn from the discussion in the previous sections of this chapter are that the past is unavoidable, and that life is to some extent influenced by destiny. These two ideas suggest that time unfolds according to certain patterns, and that, in the context of these patterns, man is made to conform to certain roles. In effect, the conclusions reached with relation to the past and destiny reflect a generally mythical view of reality. It is for this reason, as well as the fact that myth appears in other ways in Fuentes' early narrative, that the discussion of myth is pertinent to this study. In general, myth serves as a basis for evaluating and categorizing human conduct according to certain universal patterns. Through reference to myth, it is possible to verify how such patterns are perpetuated and what form they take in more recent times. In exploiting myth as a source of his narrative, the novelist is able to draw attention to the notions that underlie the society he is describing, and thus is able to give his writing a symbolic value in order that it may be properly representative of that society.

The general purpose of Fuentes' recourse to mythology and the principal sources upon which he has drawn have been very appropriately summarized by Rene Jara:

> El primero de estos niveles . . . se realiza cuando la estructura de los materiales del mundo es amplificada, o se la explicita, recurriendo a mitologías de raíz occidental clásica o bíblica --everotestamentaria o evangélica-- como correlato estructural objetivo que puede ser de mención explícita o implícita.[21]
>
> La narración tiene carácter intramitológico cuando explícita o implícitamente, los contenidos materiales del mundo funcionan en un sistema analógico referido a las teogonías y cosmogonías prehispánicas y coloniales, presentes en el inconsciente colectivo de Hispanoamérica; apoyándose en el pensar mágico primigenio, la narración se eleva al pensar visionario del mito para dar en la obra una razón explicativa del mundo, afanosa de llegar o los hondones del ser hispanoamericano y recuperar su autenticidad.[22]

Since Fuentes' early works are, above all, an endeavour to account for the underlying forces of social realities in Mexico, it is hardly surprising that he should have had recourse to Aztec and Mayan mythologies. In our discussion of the atavistic, mythical past earlier in this chapter, we noted how Fuentes depicted myth explicitly through a description of the reincarnation of the ancient gods in contemporary Mexico and through characters such as Ixca Cienfuegos and Teódula Moctezuma who act as their agents. This direct method is used sparingly in Fuentes' early works, however. In general, the ancient patterns of behaviour are integrated into his narratives much less explicitly, but still serve as their basis. As Rene Jara affirms, there is an attempt on the part of the novelist to mould reality through the coalescence of his narrative with the mythologies to which he has recourse:

> . . . el mito se conforma con la misma estructura de las objetividades y, por ende, novela y mito participan de la misma sustancia y esencia individuas . . . la sustancia mítica . . . es estructurada desde la misma narración sustentada en un modo de pensar mítico.[23]

The relationship between Fuentes' narratives and Mexican mythology is evident, above all, in the emphasis he placed in them on the notion of sacrifice, a concept which is considered to have been one of the cornerstones of Aztec thought and culture.

Since the need for sacrifice was directly connected with the survival of the sun, the preservation of an existing universal order, and the continuation of time, the importance of sacrifice was such that it was impossible to envisage the perpetuation of life without it.[24] In conversation with Emir Rodríguez Monegal, Fuentes himself comments on the continued manifestation of such ideas in Mexico in the present:

> La verdadera venganza de Moctezuma no es la disentería: es el sentido permanente del sacrificio, del sacrificio para mantener el orden del cosmos. Esa ha sido la victoria final del mundo indígena de México.[25]

Several of the stories of Los días enmascarados present the idea of sacrifice relatively directly. The rain god Chac Mool is reincarnated and ensures his continued existence through a sacrifice represented by the death of Filiberto. In "Por boca de los dioses", Oliverio is sacrificed to the gods in the basement of the hotel. In both these stories, as well as in "Tlactocatzine, del jardín de Flandes" and "Letanía de la orquídea", sacrifice results from a conflict between the fictional character and forces which prove to be stronger. In Fuentes' other works, however, the notion of sacrifice is presented more symbolically. We have already mentioned how Teódula

Moctezuma and Ixca Cienfuegos, acting as agents of the gods, seek the death of Norma Larragoití and Rodrigo Pola and bring about the downfall of Robles. These are not only thought of by Ixca and Teódula as sacrifices, but they represent sacrifices effected in order to achieve other goals. Ixca and Teódula must appease the gods with Norma's death; Robles must sacrifice his social and economic position in order to achieve a sense of authenticity; Rodrigo Pola sacrifices his principles in order to become wealthy and be accepted by the "International Set". But Robles and Rodrigo Pola, also, sacrifice others in order to achieve their own goals: for Robles, it is Mercedes Zamacona, Feliciano Sánchez and Librado Ibarra; for Rodrigo, it is his mother Rosenda. The idea of sacrifice in La región más transparente, however, transcends purely individual conduct. The lives of Froilán Reyero, Gervasio Pola, Flores Magón, Felipe Ángeles and Librado Ibarra were sacrificed for the Revolution in order that possibilities such as those represented by Federico Robles might be fulfilled. Moreover, at the end of Part II and the beginning of Part III of La región más transparente, it is clear that one generation has been destroyed --sacrificed-- so that it can be replaced by another. It is equally clear, when, in the final scene of the novel, Cienfuegos almost causes the death of Rodrigo Pola, that the new generation which emerges in Part III will also be sacrificed for a later one. In that scene, Cienfuegos perhaps taunted Rodrigo Pola with the possible realization of an idea that he had already expressed to him somewhat earlier:

> Es que un solo sacrificio, así fuera ejemplar, no bastaba. Era preciso un sacrificio diario, un alimento diario para que el sol iluminara, corriera y alimentara a su vez. No, no veo un solo Dios ni un sacrificio aislado. (p. 264)

The idea of sacrifice is also one of the fundamental elements of La muerte de Artemio Cruz. It has already been indicated earlier in this chapter that each of the decisions taken by Cruz throughout his life represented the sacrifice of another human being: the dying soldier, Regina, Gonzalo Bernal, the Indian Tobías, Gamaliel Bernal, Catalina, Lorenzo, Laura and Lilia. Moreover, Artemio's life embodies the total sacrifice of whatever ideals he may have held. On a grander scale, as in La región más transparente, the course of history itself is portrayed as a series of collective sacrifices. The Revolution represents the sacrifice of countless lives, for a cause that is not even clearly understood, and, in its aftermath, the destruction of one generation to replace it by another continually.

Thus, the generation of Gamaliel Bernal was sacrificed in favour of that of Artemio Cruz, while Cruz's generation will be replaced by that of the young Jaime Ceballos, who appears in the tenth third person episode at the New Year party given by Artemio.

In addition to the notion of sacrifice, which is one of the most evident manifestations of ancient Mexican mythology in Fuentes early fiction, there are other aspects of Aztec myth that inform not only the plot but also the structure of some works. In this vein, Liliana Befumo Boschi and Elisa Calabrese have demonstrated the importance of such aspects as the "fiesta", the Aztec concept of life and death, and the myth of Quetzalcoatl in _La muerte de Artemio Cruz_.[26] The importance of the "fiesta" as a ritual and symbolic expression of myth is particularly notable in the tenth of the third person segments of the novel, in which the New Year is celebrated, and which records the last significant day of Artemio's life previous to that on which he dies. Boschi and Calabrese comment in the following terms on the meaning of the "fiesta" both generally and specifically:

> Para el mexicano, la Fiesta cobra especial significación ya que por medio del derroche de energías acumuladas durante el año, puede liberarse, dejar de lado todo aquello que lo aísla y lo separa de los demás. Es el tiempo en que

> puede participar, comulgar con quienes lo rodean, salir de sí mismo y embriagarse de alegría, color, sexo, vino y cometer todos los excesos que compensen la permanente carencia . . .
>
> Los mexicanos, antiguos o modernos, creen en la Comunión y en la Fiesta. En La muerte de Artemio Cruz, durante la celebración de la fiesta de San Silvestre del 31 de diciembre de 1955, el personaje vuelve a reiterar los ritos y el entorno se envuelve en una atmósfera mítica que todo lo transforma.[27]

The Aztec idea of death as a natural prolongation of life, as the other side of the same coin, and as an end as well as a beginning, while evident in La región más transparente to some extent, is developed particularly in La muerte de Artemio Cruz:

> En Artemio, . . . se trata de una ceremonia ritual cumplida en el cerro que domina el valle de México y por la cual se conmemora la iniciación de un nuevo ciclo azteca, luego de cumplidos los cincuenta y dos años. Rito de entrada y salida, rito del fuego de los antiguos mexicanos, realizado por la muerte-nacimiento de Artemio Cruz.[28]

Boschi and Calabrese also see the incarnation of an aspect of the myth of Quetzalcoatl-Tezcatlipoca in the figure of Lorenzo and his relationship with Artemio Cruz, particularly in the similarity between the voyage by sea undertaken by Quetzalcoatl and that undertaken by Lorenzo:

> . . . el viaje realizado por Lorenzo, hijo de Artemio, al otro lado del mar, posee

> claras connotaciones mítico-simbólicas . . . Es precisamente el mar el que une a Lorenzo con Artemio en el nivel del tú . . . Ambos aparecen ligados entre sí y con el caballo en el estribillo-índice de manera tal, que configura un verdadero encadenamiento símbolico. Tanto Artemio como Lorenzo están unidos en el nivel del él (hechos realmente ocurridos) al mar . . . Es, pues, el viaje a través de las aguas en una embarcación que se dirige al lugar de la Conflagración . . . la presencia de Lorenzo está constantemente ligada al mar y al viaje de Quetzalcoatl . . . Tezcatlipoca-Quetzalcoatl y sus encarnaciones: Artemio Cruz, únicamente destinado a asomarse al mar y a ser arquetipo de lo oscuro y la traición, opuesto a Lorenzo, su otra mitad, el ideal dispuesto a renacer otra vez.[29]

The myth of Quetzalcoatl is not only significant in the development of the plot, but is, as M.J. Valdés points out, the basis of the structure of La muerte de Artemio Cruz.[30] Valdés' analysis of the novelistic structure, based on his study of the third person narrative sections in relation to the Toltec calendar and on certain notions emanating from the teachings of Quetzalcoatl, explains several aspects of the structure of the novel, such as the use of three narrative voices, the arrangement of the third person sections, and the use of thirteen triads. He points out that the three narrative voices correspond to the three faces or identities of which, according to the myth, the person consisted.[31] According to Valdés, the arrangement of the third person narrations follow the Toltec horoscope for one born on April 9 of 1889, Artemio Cruz's birthdate:

> Each of the third person's narrations is the dated reading of the horoscope for one born on April 9, 1889, that is, the sign of tecpatl. These passages are the realization of his destiny.
>
> The organization of the dated narrative follows the general pattern of the battle of the body (tiger) and the spirit (eagle) in sets of three. In the first set we move from Artemio at 52 years to 30 and then to 24. We move into the past in quest of the meaning of Catalina the wife who feels superior and Regina the soldadera who loved him. The unknown character of Catalina and the memory of Regina become key motives in the isolation of Artemio Cruz.
>
> The second set consists of Artemio at age 35, 38 and 58. Now we move in the opposite direction as we encounter the mixture of cowardice and audacity that lead us to the image of alienation as Artemio looks into the mirror.
>
> The third set presents Artemio at age 26, 45 and 49 when his son is killed in Spain. Artemio Cruz escapes bodily death through daring but is unable to attain spiritual freedom. He is becoming a prisoner of his own hell of the material. His son Lorenzo is killed by an airplane, the eagle, and with him die Artemio's hopes of redemption for his own loss of ideals. The last set moves again in the counterdirection from age 65 to 13 to birth as the last trajectory is made of the life-long battle. The thirteenth part is the final synthesis in death.[32]

Finally, the thirteen triads also correspond to the Toltec calendar:

> The thirteen divisions of the novel are established in keeping with the Toltec calendar of divination which divides the cycle of life into thirteen periods which are dominated by a variable number of the 20 signs of the Toltec horoscope.[33]

Although the fundamental concepts of pre-Hispanic mythology form the basis for much of the plot and structure of La región más transparente and La muerte de Artemio Cruz, the principles of Judeo-Christian thought --the concept of a fall from grace, followed by redemption and salvation-- are not in the least excluded from either novel. As our discussion of destiny in the earlier part of this chapter has already revealed, the trajectory of the lives of several of Fuentes' characters follows precisely the pattern transcribed by loss of innocence, feelings of guilt induced by a sense of remorse, and an ultimate desire for redemption. It is unnecessary either to repeat our earlier discussion in detail or to examine the evident parallels between the concept of destiny we have described and the Christian tradition. At this point, however, it is relevant to draw attention to two conclusions with respect to Fuentes' use of mythology. In the first instance, by constructing a narrative intrinsically related to the ideologies and myths that underlie reality in Mexico, it is possible to portray how the time that elapses for man in the course of his life is governed, in terms of the incidents that constitute it, by particular archetypal patterns. In the second, by having had recourse to the two mythologies that figure most predominantly in

Mexican tradition, Fuentes has evidently sought to give, not just a fragmentary view, but a more general perspective of the hidden motives in Mexico that are to be thought of as determining the nature of human conduct.

It is not only the plots and structure of Fuentes' works that have a basis in mythology. Myth is also made part of his narratives through characterization. As has already been pointed out in this study, some of the principal characters of his novels and short stories, in addition to being portrayed as individuals, are also given a representative function. They are symbols, of social, historical, and, in particular, natural forces. In effect, the identification of man with the forces of nature is one of the most effective methods of establishing a mythical sense of reality in a novel. As Rene Jara states, "se trata de conectar al hombre con su naturaleza . . . En la novela actual, la naturaleza es tomada en su sentido etimológico de origen, nacimiento y manera de ser".[34] In an excellent study of myth in La muerte de Artemio Cruz, he has also affirmed that it is precisely this connection with cosmic forces which distinguishes what he refers to as the mythopoetic novel from the modern realist novel:

> Esto es justamente lo que marca el paso de

> la novela moderna de carácter realista y documental a esta novela de función mitopoyética y sobredocumental. El tránsito se produce cuando no se trata sólo de las relaciones del individuo con la sociedad, sino también de las relaciones de la humanidad con la naturaleza.[35]

Artemio Cruz is one of the best examples of the character-symbol in Fuentes' early works. As we have already noted, the trajectory of his life is itself the embodiment of certain archetypal patterns. Although, within the concept of this characteristic, he may nonetheless be considered as an individual, there is evidence of a constant endeavour on the part of the author to transcend his individuality and to employ him as a symbol. The course of Artemio's life coincides almost exactly with the trajectory of the Revolution and its aftermath. Yet it would be more correct to state that the history of the Revolution is projected through the life of Cruz. He is thus made to represent the Revolution. Moreover, he also represents the new Mexican bourgeoisie that owes its origins to the social turmoil of the revolutionary period. This representative quality is, in fact, directly attributed to him by Gamaliel Bernal:

> Artemio Cruz. Artemio Cruz. Así se llamaba, entonces, el nuevo mundo surgido de la guerra civil; así se llamaban quienes llegaban a sustituirlo. (p. 50)

The implications of the symbolic value attached to Artemio Cruz are not relevant solely to the limiting context of a single historical period. He also embodies certain characteristics representative of Mexico in a more general sense. He is a *mestizo*, a product of its two predominant races. Cruz's name, received from his mother, yet the name by which he is known, in addition to symbolizing the myths he has relived in the course of his life,[36] is equally symbolic of the mixing or crossing of cultures that resulted from the Spanish conquest. He is therefore intended to represent a people, Mexicans of all races and classes. Not surprisingly, when Artemio's subconscious addresses him in the second person narrative segments of the novel, there is often a certain ambiguity, so that what is spoken appears to be addressed, as in the following example, both to Artemio in particular and to Mexico in general:

> ¿a dónde vas con la chingada?
> oh misterio, oh engaño, oh nostalgia:
> crees que con ella regresarás a los
> orígenes: ¿a cuáles orígenes? no tú:
> nadie quiere regresar a la edad de oro
> mentirosa, a los orígenes siniestros, al
> gruñido bestial, a la lucha por la carne
> del oso, por la cueva y el pedernal, al
> sacrificio y a la locura, al terror sin
> nombre del origen, al fetiche inmolado,
> al miedo del sol, miedo de la tormenta,
> miedo del eclipse, miedo del fuego, miedo
> de las máscaras, terror de los ídolos,
> miedo de la pubertad, miedo del agua, miedo

> del hombre, miedo del desamparo, terror cósmico: chingada, pirámide de negaciones, teocalli del espanto. (p. 145)

The word "chingada", which has come to be considered a symbol of Mexico,[37] is identified with Cruz:

> Tú la pronunciarás: es tu palabra: y tu palabra es la mía; palabra de honor: palabra de hombre: . . . blasón de la raza, salvavida de los límites, resumen de la historia: santo y seña de México: tu palabra. (pp. 143-44)

Thus, in the ritualistic repetition of this word in the novel (pp. 143-145), Rene Jara sees a symbol both of the condition of Spanish America and of Artemio's inability to complete the cycle that would end with the reestablishment of his sense of authenticity and his redemption:

> La condición histórica y humana del hombre latinoamericano es sintetizada en un vocablo que adquiere traza de sortilegio: la "chingada" . . . La ambigüedad de esta palabra es suma y cifra de la incertidumbre americana . . . La chingada simboliza el obstáculo que impide al hombre trasladarse hasta sus orígenes, su autenticidad . . . Es una cadena infinita. El hombre: hijo de la chingada. La vida, producto de la chingada. Artemio --tú-- . . . primogénito de la chingada.[38]

Finally, Artemio Cruz must be thought of as representative of man in a more universal sense. As Rene Jara has affirmed, the voice of his subconscious, expressed in the second person narrative segments of the novel, is also the collective voice of the subconscious of humanity:

> El hecho concreto --al ser proyectado primero por el narrador demiúrgico que habla en segunda persona-- se desrealiza en la imaginación del lector, difumina sus contornos de cotidianidad para convertirse en representación simbólica del todo.[39]

In the following passage, in particular, Artemio is addressed as if he were universal man:

> Aprenderás a frotar dos maderos hasta incendiarlos porque necesitarás arrojar una tea a la entrada de tu cueva y espantar a las bestias que no te distinguirán, que no diferenciarán tu carne de la carne de otras bestias y tendrás que construir mil templos, dictar mil leyes, escribir mil libros, adorar mil dioses, pintar mil cuadros, fabricar mil máquinas, dominar mil pueblos, romper mil átomos para volver a arrojar tu tea encendida a la entrada de la cueva. (p. 207)

Just as his existence is representative of a natural cycle, through which life begins, ends, and is begun again, his personal history is to be identified as an encapsulated form of the history of the human race.

Although with the notable difference that, in spite of himself, he does obtain some form of redemption, Federico Robles appears to be an earlier version of Artemio Cruz. As we have seen, his life is also related to certain archetypal patterns and follows a similar trajectory as a result of its relationship to the Revolution. By the same token, he is also a symbol of the new bourgeoisie which profited from the Revolution, and was, as Cienfuegos observes to him, the source of its betrayal:

> Ahora a ustedes les ha tocado acarrear con todos los pecados de nuestro país. A usted, en lo particular, puesto que le ha tocado vivir todos los hechos fundamentales de medio siglo de vida mexicana. (p. 273)

Federico Robles' significance as a symbolic character, however, appears to be more particularly equated with Mexico and is not given the more universal connotations that are evident in the case of Artemio Cruz. Symbolic of the many destructive forces in Mexican life, Federico Robles is also described as a "gran chingón":

> Los ojos de Cienfuegos, sonrientes, absorbieron todo el físico, tenso y fláccido a la vez, del banquero y, en silencio, sus labios fueron repitiendo las palabras de otra entrevista, las palabras de otro hombre que inventó el poder mexicano, de otro gran chingón. (p. 122)

The identification between Robles and Mexico is further consolidated in the final chapter of Part II of La región más transparente. After the social disgrace that occurs as a consequence of his bankruptcy, Robles is described in terms of the eagle and the serpent, the two heraldic symbols of Mexico. On account of his downfall, he is referred to as "el águila reptante" (p. 428). His eyes are described as those of a fallen bird ("los ojos de ave descendida de Federico Robles", p. 430). Rather than emulating the eagle, his movements are those of the serpent ("su cuerpo reptando entre los cadáveres injustificados", p. 431). Not only do these images confirm that Robles is representative of Mexico, but, because they have their origin in the legends of the pre-Hispanic past,[40] they also serve to consolidate his identification with Mexican mythology and the symbolism of the sacrifice that is implied by his downfall itself.

Further examples of the archetypal figures represented by Cruz and Federico Robles are not repeated in such detail in Fuentes' early works. They do appear, however, in embryonic form in Roberto Régules and Rodrigo Pola in La región más transparente and in Jaime Ceballos, who, in addition to being the protagonist of Las buenas conciencias, also appears briefly in both La región más transparente and La muerte de Artemio Cruz. They replace the dead Artemio Cruz and the ruined Robles, will likely have a similar trajectory, and will ensure that the same cycles are perpetuated. Indeed, the cycle has already begun to renew itself before the end of all three novels. In

Las buenas conciencias, Jaime Ceballos returns to the fold and adopts the lifestyle of his forebears; in _La región más transparente_, Roberto Régules prospers at Robles' expense, while his daughter Betina, married to Jaime Ceballos, represents the emerging generation that will replace him; and in _La muerte de Artemio Cruz_, Jaime Ceballos, also representing the new generation, appears at a party hosted by the aging Cruz.

In addition to these characters, there are others who are also to be considered as having certain symbolic functions. In _La región más transparente_, for instance, Ixca Cienfuegos fulfills a role that, in some respects, is similar to that of the second person narrative voice in _La muerte de Artemio Cruz_. As a ubiquitous being, seemingly in all places at all times, he also acts as the collective unconscious, able to stir the guilt and to prod the memory of all the other characters with whom he comes into contact. In possession of the total history of all the characters of the novel, it is small wonder, then, that he is able to stimulate recollections in them of events that took place even before their birth. In the final pages of the novel, it is clearly indicated that the entire story narrated in _La región más transparente_ and more besides, in short, the complete history of

Mexico and Mexicans, has been seen through his eyes, as if he were the depository of it all. Even more explicitly, the reader is told that Cienfuegos is the sum of all the events and all the characters of the novel. Everything is reflected in him:

> Y Cienfuegos era, en sus ojos de águila pétrea y serpiente de aire, la ciudad, sus voces, recuerdos, rumores, presentimientos, la ciudad vasta y anónima, con los brazos cruzados de Copilco a los Indios Verdes, con las piernas abiertas del Peñon de los Baños a Cuatro Caminos, con el ombligo retorcido y dorado del Zócalo. (pp. 453-454)

Cienfuegos is also a symbol for man in Latin America, a mixture of two races:

> . . . los otros ojos, de almendra quemada, de Ixca, sus sienes pobladas de cerdas, sus anchos labios y sus facciones, alternativamente indígenas en pureza, pura y oscuramente europeas -- de un mediterráneo asoleado y denso y ocioso en el mar. (pp. 131-132)

He is identified with the land and nature; his voice is likened to stone, his face to the landscape:

> Rodrigo dio la cara a Cienfuegos; tuvo la sensación, inconsciente, violenta y olvidada, de que en el rostro de ese hombre se reproducía el mismo paisaje chato y oscuro del patio: que el rostro de Cienfuegos descendía sobre el suyo, iqual que la lluvia sobre los monotones de basura hinchada, sobre los techos de lámina y azoteas de tezontle y pavimentos de la ciudad. Y como en las calles, ese rostro se tragaba la naturaleza y la

> mataba, como las calles, con un gesto
> que equivalía al ruido de sinfonolas
> y claxons. (pp. 259-260)

The principal female characters in Fuentes' novels and short stories also perform an important function as symbols. The majority of them may also be considered as archetypes. Although it is not always the case, the women of indigenous origen generally embody the archetypal qualities of the Earth Mother. Others, often of European origin, are portrayed as the unfulfilled female. In La región más transparente, the women who have symbolic significance are the widow Teódula, Hortensia Chacón, Mercedes Zamacona and Rosenda Pola. In La muerte de Artemio Cruz, Regina, Catalina, Laura and, to some extent, Lilia are symbolic of further aspects of the female. In Las buenas conciencias, the only archetypal female figure is Asunción Balcárcel. All these women may be thought of as symbols "de la Madre Tierra, del origen, la fuente de toda vida, la matriz primigenia, signo de regeneración y renacimiento".[41]

Teódula is one of the most evidently symbolic figures of La región más transparente. She represents the mythical Earth Mother, Coatlicue of the Aztec Pantheon, from whom issued the gifts of food and life. Her face is described as being of dark corn (p. 204), thus identifying her with the earth and the primary source of food of the ancient Mexicans, as well as the substance of which they believed man was made. At the same time, she is the monster Cipactli, the devouring mother who is at once the womb and the tomb.[42] Like Coatlicue, Teódula identifies completely with the earth and the rythmic cycle of nature. Like the goddess, too, Teódula has the duality of being the one who both gives and takes life, as is indicated by her caring for Rosa Morales' son when he is ill while, at the same time, seeking to feed life through sacrifice and death through the destruction of Norma Larragoiti.

Teódula's symbolic function is more directly conveyed than any of the other female characters mentioned above because the re-creation of an ancient mythology in the contemporary world described in the novel is most explicitly portrayed through her. Hortensia Chacón does not perform the ancient rituals brought back to life through Teódula, but she is nonetheless representative of the long suffering female and the Earth mother, who embodies the essence of the origin, source of life, perfection and authenticity. After Robles' financial ruin, he returns with her to live in a small cottage away from the city . As such, her role is to lead him back to his origins. While Robles is not quite aware of the process in these terms, both she and Ixca Cienfuegos are able to place his life in its true perspective:

> ¿Cuál era este origen, verdadero origen, de Robles? Ixca . . . sabía que debió ser de tal manera escueto y sencillo que él, Ixca, jamás lo entendería. Que la vida oscura y marginal que Hortensia Chacón le ofrecía era un sustituto, a lo sumo un reflejo intermedio de ese encuentro original, que el ejercicio de poder descrito por Librado Ibarra . . . no era sino una fuga . . . de ese mismo origen escondido. Y en el destino de ese origen, sintió en ese momento Ixca Cienfuegos, allí se libraría la batalla, allí triunfarían o la nueva imagen de Robles, o Cienfuegos y Teódula. (pp. 356 -357)

Hortensia is sure of Robles' origin and final destiny:

> Porque el mundo que será al fin el mundo de Federico Robles está aquí, créame usted. Todavía no, porque Federico no es quien es en realidad, sino lo que la vida lo ha hecho. Como yo. Pero atrás, señor, atrás está esa cara verdadera, la primera, la única . . . Este era el mundo que quería. (p. 364)

Thus, when the cycle finally closes for Robles, when his origin and destiny meet, he symbolically makes his way slowly towards Hortensia's apartment:

> Y el último peldaño, roto, donde el pie muelle pierde el equilibrio y toda la vida es vuelta a sacudir, exigiendo que se le recuerde, que se sepa que fue todo lo anterior, que se niega a ser cancelada. Allí, a la altura del último peldaño, se

> abría la puerta de Hortensia Chacón.
> (p. 433-434)

In La muerte de Artemio Cruz, first Regina, then Catalina, and later Laura represent the possibility of authenticity for Artemio Cruz, but, unlike Federico Robles, Artemio never takes advantage of this opportunity. These women nevertheless remain in his memory as his ultimate possibility of redemption. Regina, who for Artemio is the ideal woman, beautiful, sensuous and generous, is the surest representative of the Earth Mother. Of mixed blood, like Artemio, she is, perhaps, the only truly authentic character in the novel. Catalina Cruz, Artemio's wife, is representative of the frustrated female, and, as such, can be compared with Asunción Balcárcel, Jaime's aunt and adoptive mother in Las buenas conciencias. Although their frustration stems from different sources, both women symbolize the unfulfilled female, Asunción as a result of her inability to bear children because of her husband's impotence, and Catalina because of her inability to love and allow herself to be loved by her husband.

The portrayal of characters of archetypal significance is not the limit of Fuentes' endeavour to give his narratives the connotations of myth. The depiction of such characters should be placed in the context of our earlier references to magical realism, which, as Rene Jara has explained, entails the representation of reality in different and broader terms than was possible in the traditional novel:

> El relato tradicional, al trabajar con la ecuación causa-efecto, constreñía la realidad a lo que garantizaban las leyes del mundo físico y lo que no se asimilaba a esas leyes era considerado "sobrenatural", prontamente reducido a la flagrante falsedad de hechicería supersticiosa.
>
> Las distinciones entre naturaleza y sobrenaturaleza desaparecen ahora para conjugarse en una realidad cuya índole nos remite al estadio mítico, por cuanto el objeto del relato es la recreación de las conexiones del hombre con las fuerzas cósmicas que encarnan en su mundo.[43]

This "super-reality" embraces all possible realities. Physical reality is not distinguished from psychic reality and has the same value as dream or the processes of the imagination. Life and death are portrayed on the same level, so that the long dead roam the earth just as those who are still alive. The distinction between sleep and waking and between what is spoken and what is simply thought all disappear. In effect, it is a view of reality that is inherent to a view associated with myth.

As we have now established, there is much in Fuentes' early fiction that is associated with myth and much that is based on a magical realist view of the world. In the terms of this view, it need not be explained why Aztec and Mayan gods appear in modern, twentieth century Mexico and demand sacrifices as in ancient times. The reincarnation of Chac Mool and the ability of a mouth snatched from a painted portrait to speak and to control the movements and the mind of Oliverio are further indications of the phenomenon. In this world of marvellous reality, it is accepted that an orchid might bloom from a human coccyx, that Carlota's ghost might appear in an old mansion in Mexico City, and that the old widow Consuelo might reincarnate herself as the youthful Aura. This view also provides the context in which the thoughts of characters in La región más transparente are passed to Ixca Cienfuegos without the benefit of speech and gives some basis for explaining Cienfuegos himself, who seems to be omniscient and omnipresent. By the same token, it allows us to accept the scope of the memory attributed to Artemio Cruz, who is able to remember the events of the day of his son's death in the Spanish Civil War in detail, although he was not present, to remember his own birth, and to narrate the story of his own death.

By having recourse to the techniques of magical realism and giving his characters and their conduct the same terms of reference as myth, Carlos Fuentes is able to convey a sense of time that is much broader than might be accepted conventionally. The sense of time revealed through magical realism and myth is not limited, in terms of the individual, to a time that encompasses his birth, life, and death, or to the chronological sequence of events that occur in his lifetime. It embraces all times and places, does not distinguish absolutely between life and death, nor recognize any distinction between the perception of time from interior or exterior, subjective or objective points of view. What this amounts to, as Rene Jara has pointed out, while referring to statements from Octavio Paz's El arco y la lira, is a particular sense of timelessness:

> Este tiempo mítico reencarna y actualiza en los personajes que lo poseen; su movilidad abre al hombre "las puertas de acceso al tiempo original que abraza todos los tiempos, pasados o futuros, en un presente, en una presencia total . . ." "El mito, así, contiene la vida humana en su totalidad: por medio del ritmo actualiza un pasado arquetípico, es decir un pasado que potencialmente es un futuro dispuesto a encarnar en un presente". Por eso, en la región temporal del mito los contenidos de conciencia del individuo se funden con los de la humanidad.[44]

Fuentes' use of myth should not therefore be seen just as a device intended to give poetic texture to his work, but as an essential element of the overall sense that he makes of time. The explicit relationship of characters and events to mythology, the collective unconscious, represented by the second person narrative voice in La muerte de Artemio Cruz and by Ixca Cienfuegos in La región más transparente, and the apparent ability of characters to identify, such as in Las buenas conciencias, with events that are not part of their own direct experience, are all to be considered among the characteristics of Fuentes' portrayal of time in terms of myth. Moreover, the perception of time in such terms is not adjusted solely to the linear, chronological flow of events. It is attuned to a broader system of measurement and is adjusted to the rhythmical cycles of life, death, and regeneration. For this reason, the representation of events as part of a continuously repeating cycle forms an important part of Fuentes' works and, for this reason also, the past looms so largely in his narratives. Each individual carries with him the burden of his own past and that of his kind, which entails a memory of all that has preceded, even to the point at which history began:

> Estoy sentado en una playa que antes --si recuerdo algo de geografía-- no bañaba mar alguno. No hay más muebles en el universo que dos estrellas, las olas y la arena. He tomado unas ramas secas; las froto, durante mucho tiempo . . . ah, la primera chispa. . . . ("El que inventó la pólvora", pp. 96-97)

In the light of these observations, we may conclude that the connotations of myth are evident throughout Fuentes' early fiction and are reflected in the manner in which he has structured his narratives. The three concepts that may be noted as relevant to the understanding of myth are equally applicable to time: that the different elements which contribute to the multi-faceted nature of reality are of equal significance and may be perceived simultaneously; that man has conducted himself, and always will conduct himself according to the same basic patterns and sense of understanding of his condition; and that the past and the present thereby constitute a single phenomenon that together determine the inevitable direction that events will take in the future. What we have endeavoured to demonstrate in the course of our study is that the structural characteristics and the content of Fuentes' early fiction serve the purpose of examining and illustrating these concepts. The de-emphasis of a chronological sense of time, the fragmentation of the narratives through use of time shifts, the presentation of time from a subjective point of view, the fusion of the past and the present, and the portrayal of events in terms of their cyclical recurrence are, as we have seen, all devices employed by Fuentes with the intention of revealing the underlying connotations of time.

In brief, it may be concluded that he has endeavoured to discover in what sense life in contemporary Mexico may be seen as a response to the archetypal patterns of myth.

NOTES

[1] John R. Franco, "The Inescapable Past in the Works of Carlos Fuentes", Unpublished Thesis (Texas Western College, Texas, 1965).

[2] Armand F. Baker, "El tiempo en la novela hispanoamericana", Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation (University of Iowa, 1967), pp. 321-322.

[3] Luis Harss, Los nuestros (Buenos Aires, 1963), p. 365.

[4] Agustín Velarde Rosas, Carlos Fuentes y Las buenas conciencias (Mexico, 1962), p. 37.

[5] Roberto Fernández Retamar, "Carlos Fuentes y la otra novela de la Revolución mexicana", Casa de las Américas (La Habana), IV, 26 (oct.-nov. 1964), 123-128.

[6] Octavio Paz, "La máscara y la transparencia", in Carlos Fuentes, Cuerpos y ofrendas: antología (Madrid, 1972), p. 7.

[7] Emmanuel Carballo, "Conversación con Carlos Fuentes", "La Cultura en México", núm. 14, Suplemento de Siempre (23 Mayo, 1962), p. v.

[8] In addition to the general sense in which we have used the term destiny in this study, to refer to the lot of the individual, it sometimes appears in La región más transparente and La muerte de Artemio Cruz with a slightly different connotation. For example, Ixca Cienfuegos appears to use the term in a fatalistic sense to indicate a kind of powerlessness on the part of the individual faced with his fate (pp. 241 and 263). Rosenda Pola tends to use it in a much more positive sense to indicate the possible good that could have come from her life (pp. 152, 153 and 235). Norma Larragoiti gives the term a slightly different sense when she says to Cienfuegos, "Yo sólo he cumplido mi propio destino" (p. 307) in which she appears to equate it with financial and social success. In La muerte de Artemio Cruz, the term occasionally assumes the connotation of fate in an almost classical sense in statements such as "tu destino te perseguirá" (p. 17) and "el destino te encontrará" (p. 17), and sometimes in a sense that seems to imply predestination: "la fatalidad de su destino" (p. 46).

[9] See for example pages 253, 287, 356 and 394 of La región más transparente and page 279 of La muerte de Artemio Cruz.

[10] See for example pages 253, 292, 376 of La región más transparente.

[11] Paul Alexandru Georgescu, "La dialéctica del destino en las novelas de Carlos Fuentes", Actas del Tercer Congreso Internacional de Hispanistas (Mexico, 1970), p. 412.

[12] Georgescu, p. 413.

[13] Georgescu, p. 413.

[14] Georgescu, p. 413.

[15] Artemio's subconscious, the second person narrative voice, indicates that these are the main motives behind his decisions: "al elegir sí, al elegir no, al permitir que no tu deseo, idéntico a tu libertad, te señalara un laberinto sino tu interés, tu miedo, tu orgullo" (p. 209).

[16] Carballo, p. vi.

[17] Georgescu, p. 414.

[18] Georgescu, p. 414.

[19] Georgescu, p. 413.

[20] Roberto E. Ríos, La novela y el hombre hispanoamericano (Buenos Aires, 1970), p. 103.

[21] Rene Jara C., "El mito y la nueva novela hispanoamericana: a propósito de La muerte de Artemio Cruz", Signos: Estudios de Lengua y Literatura (Valparaíso, Chile), II, núms. 1-2 (enero-febrero), p. 14.

[22] Jara, p. 17.

[23] Jara, p. 14.

[24] Miguel León-Portilla, La filosofía nahuatl (Mexico, 1966), pp. 100 and 120.

[25] Emir Rodríguez Monegal, "Carlos Fuentes", in Homenaje a Carlos Fuentes, ed. Helmy F. Giacoman (Long Island City, 1971), p. 31.

[26] Liliana Befumo Boschi and Elisa Calabrese, Nostalgia del futuro en la obra de Carlos Fuentes (Buenos Aires, 1974), pp. 21-28, 41-67.

[27] Boschi and Calabrese, pp. 24-35.

[28] Boschi and Calabrese, pp. 47-48.

[29] Boschi and Calabrese, pp. 62-64.

[30] M.J. Valdés, "Myth and History in Cien años de soledad and La muerte de Artemio Cruz", Reflexión 2, 2ª época, III-IV (1974-75), 246.

[31] Valdés, p. 247.

[32] Valdés, p. 248.

[33] Valdés, p. 248.

[34] Jara, p. 19.

[35] Jara, p. 41.

[36] Rene Jara identifies the myths in the following passage:

> El símbolo cristiano del dolor, del sufrimiento resignado, del destino de sacrificio, de la separación de los hombres y, en este caso, de sí mismo en la mezcla de la sangre que se autorrepudia. (p. 39).

[37] For further discussion of the significance of the word see Octavio Paz, El Laberinto de la Soledad (Mexico, 1964), pp. 65-88.

[38] Jara, pp. 26-27.

[39] Jara, p. 36.

[40] Román Piña Chan, Una visión del México prehispánico (Mexico, 1967), p. 227.

[41] Jara, p. 52.

[42] C.A. Burland, The Gods of Mexico (New York,

1967), p. ix.

[43] Jara, p. 19.

[44] Jara, p. 11.

CONCLUSION

Our method of analysis of time in the early fiction of Carlos Fuentes is based on a description of four distinctive elements in his work: the fictive present, the fictive past, the fusion of past and present, and the relationship between time as theme and narrative structure. It is therefore appropriate that the point of departure for our conclusions consist of a brief review of each of these elements as a means of making some general observations concerning Fuentes' preoccupation with time and the manner of its representation in his early work as a whole.

Whether it is subjected to some development, as in *La región más transparente*, or serves as a static point of reference, as in *Las buenas conciencias*, the fictive present constitutes the nucleus of all of Fuentes' early novels and short stories. As a point of reference, it is the prop required by the reader to maintain a sense of order in the narrative and to permit him to integrate the multiple levels of time that are evident in the majority of Fuentes' works. Undoubtedly, it is for this reason that the fictive present generally develops in the context of a relatively objective chronological framework. Regardless of the evident linear progression that it contributes to the movement of the narratives in general, however, the absolute temporal objectivity of the fictive present is affected in some cases through its extreme fragmentation, the interpolation of the past, and the introduction of less objective elements, such as the processes of thought of a character. Nonetheless, the general impact of the fictive present on the narrative structure as a whole is to endow it with a sense of objective time and, as such, to provide it with a sense of time related to the real world. The importance of this characteristic is particularly significant in light of the fact that the greater part of Fuentes' narratives convey some degree of subjective time.

The fictive past, for instance, predominates over the fictive present in Fuentes' early works. In some cases, such as _Las buenas conciencias_, the present is almost entirely effaced, and it is only in "Letanía de la orquídea" that the past does not intrude on the present in some form. Although several techniques are employed to integrate the past into the narrative, its introduction usually conveys a sense of subjective time as a general result of attributing it to the memory of a character. Moreover, the narration of the past itself has a significant impact on the overall structure of the text because it is a key factor in fragmenting the narrative, in multiplying the number of time lines, and in diminishing the sense of objective time that might otherwise be obtained.

The process of reducing the purely objective connotations of time is equally enhanced through the fusion of the past and the present. Although this fusion is obtained in several ways, not the least of which is the integration of the narratives pertaining to the fictive present and the fictive past, one of Fuentes' principal techniques is his recourse to the devices associated with magical realism. The result is the creation of a sense of super-reality, which has a marked effect on even the most objective of time structures. The fusion of past and present produces a sense of cyclical time, which imposes itself on the linear structures implied by objective time. Moreover, the attribution of a cyclical form to the progression of time affects both the fictive past and the fictive present as a consequence of Fuentes' recourse to certain narrative devices, such as the disposition of the text itself, or his portrayal of cyclical patterns of conduct that are evident in the lives of the fictional characters. The overall result is that a sense of cyclical time is the predominant temporal structure of Fuentes' early fiction.

The cyclical character of time and its effect on narrative structure are further enhanced on consideration of the principal themes related to time. The themes of the inevitable past, destiny and myth are not only interrelated, but exercise a significant influence on the time structure of Fuentes' novels and short stories. Through their elaboration, a concept of time is conveyed according to which the past continues to hold significance for the present because the patterns of human behaviour, as well as those of nations, repeat the patterns of the past. Thus time, as is implied in a general sense by the history and destiny of each individual and nation, is portrayed as the continual repetition of a pattern that has existed since time itself began. The structures with respect to time that are evident in the works we have discussed are, in effect, a function of the expression of these ideas.

Although there is some variation in the techniques employed to elaborate the themes and structures to which we have referred, it may be concluded that Fuentes' early fiction is constituted by a cohesive group of works. Los días enmascarados may be seen as an introduction to the group as a whole, not only because it was the first to be published, but also because it contains techniques and themes that are later developed more fully. The recuperation of the past and its use as a means of fragmenting the chronology of the narrative are evident in "Chac Mool". In the same story, the brief, static fictive present, leading to a fully developed fictive past, in addition to the technique of beginning the narrative at its end, are more fully elaborated in _Las buenas conciencias_. At the same time, "Tlactocatzine, del jardín de Flandes", both from the perspective of its techniques and its content, is a shorter version of _Aura_.

If _Los días enmascarados_ is an introduction to the works we have discussed, _La muerte de Artemio Cruz_ is undoubtedly their culmination. In many respects, the techniques through which Fuentes' concept of time is portrayed in the earlier works are refined and perfected in this novel. The recourse to memory as a means of presenting the past; the use of the third person narrator in passages attributed to the memory of a character; the structuring of a narrative around the nucleus of a fictive present as a means of delving into the past; the preponderance of past time; the use of time shifts in fragmenting the narrative; and a linear time structure subordinated to a cyclical form: these are all techniques which are handled with more complexity and confidence than in the earlier narratives.

In comparison with the earlier works, La muerte de Artemio Cruz is a significant consolidation of narrative content. Artemio Cruz is a more complete character than either Federico Robles or Jaime Ceballos. The trajectory of his destiny is traced more fully and the patterns of time portrayed through the narration of his life are presented in more detail. While the attempt, in La región más transparente, to portray the entire society of Mexico City has a certain merit, it also poses problems, among which is the difficulty of projecting a single, but complex and representative, symbol of society as a whole. It is possible that Ixca Cienfuegos is intended to fulfil this function, but, in La muerte de Artemio Cruz, although Fuentes covers less territory, so to speak, he is able to use the central character of the novel as a much broader, more comprehensive, and more evident symbol, representative of Mexico as a whole. This endeavour to portray Mexico by means of a character-symbol should not, however, be seen solely as a development in Fuentes' techniques of characterization. With the exception of several of the stories of Los días enmascarados, the history of Mexico, with particular emphasis on the revolutionary and post-revolutionary periods, is not just a background against which Fuentes' narratives are set, but an intrinsic part of his subject. As such, the time that elapses and the manner in which it elapses during the span of the life of Artemio Cruz, or, for that matter, during the life of any of the other characters portrayed in Fuentes' fiction, are intended to be identified with the same time that passes and the manner of its passing for Mexico itself. By establishing Artemio Cruz as a more clearly identifiable symbol of Mexico and its history, however, the accomplishment of La muerte de Artemio Cruz as a culmination of the period of Fuentes' work with which we have been concerned, is that it presents his preoccupation with time and with Mexico in a more complete and more unified form.

The characteristics which establish the cohesiveness of Fuentes' early works are also those which distinguish them from his more recent writings. More recently, his preoccupation with time has been placed in a different context. The predominance of Mexican history, mythology, characters and settings is to some extent attenuated by other factors. This is not to say, however, that Mexico and its people are no longer a major concern of Fuentes, but rather that these concerns are placed within the broader context of the world at large. The narrative techniques employed in the more recent works also represent a considerable development in comparison with those exploited during the early period. While later novels, such as *Cumpleaños* and *Terra nostra*, might well be discussed on the basis of the methods of analysis used in this study, it is clear that they would need considerable refinement and elaboration. Our study, therefore, is only a partial view of the significance of time and the methods of its portrayal in Fuentes' work as a whole. Nevertheless, our analysis confirms our opinion that Fuentes' early period, as we have defined it in our introduction, is, in fact, constituted by a group of works in certain aspects distinct from the works he has written more recently. Thus, in spite of the limitations which we established in defining the scope of our study, it is hoped that our analysis will serve as a useful point of departure on which to base a further study of Fuentes' fiction.

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